

The A. M. E. Zion Quarterly Review

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The Adoration of the Magi

BY TIEPOLO



Used by permission of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ADORATION OF THE MAGI**Tiepolo. Venetian. 1696-1770.****Original: Metropolitan Museum, N. Y. C.****by Florence Turverey Reeves**

(A picture-centered worship service to be used with a set of three 2x2 kodachrome slides consisting of one slide of the entire picture, a detail of the Ethiopian King and a detail of the Holy Family. These may be purchased from the Editor of the Quarterly or from the author of this article for \$2.50 prepaid. An 8x10 photograph may be purchased from the Metropolitan Museum for 85c. The numbers indicate when the next slide is to be used.)

Slide I

Venice, once the glory of the Adriatic, was declining rapidly during the 18th century. Her great artists had passed away but with the coming of Tiepolo, there was a great upsurge of activity in the field of painting. He was gifted with extraordinary technical skill and in order to meet the demand of the times, he worked out a combination of grandeur and charm which fitted the elegant tastes of his day.

The story of the Adoration of the Magi was well adapted to Tiepolo's talents and the mood of the times. Here one could paint elegance and grandeur, pomp, show, ceremony, for one's fancy could run riot in picturing the fabulous East. This is a fine example of the artist's feeling for splendor, for although set in ruins, it is a grand scene. The old masters never thought about historical accuracy; their chief interest lay in presenting a message. Decayed temples, palaces, forums, arenas, aquaducts were scattered over the length and breadth of Italy and it was quite natural that Italian artists should use these picturesque ruins as a setting for the Birth and the Coming of the Magi. Tiepolo has added a highly decorated triumphal arch to this scene. This and the broken cornice at the Virgin's feet seem to say that the Christian faith will rise upon the ruins of the pagan world and that the coming of this Child surpasses the glory of Rome.

A vivid and dramatic pageant is going on before us. We observe at once the striking form of the eldest of the Magi prostrate before the Child. He is thrown strangely in his peculiar attitude of worship at the very feet of the Mother and Child. All of his body is bathed in his rich robes, with the fingers of one hand and his head alone showing. The arrival of the Kings has caused a stir in heaven and upon earth. "Angels from the realm of glory" sing praises in the sky; the stable-boy bringing hay to the ox comfortably asleep, is suddenly caught short by

an unexpected sight; the owner of "the Inn" who has climbed his good, stout, home-made ladder to make some repairs to the roof, has come out from behind the great marble column in order to gaze down upon the King who has removed his crown to throw himself at the feet of this little Child.

The picture is divided into two groups—the Holy Family with the eldest of the Magi, and the other two Kings and their retinue at the left. In order to indicate that Christ came to save all mankind, tradition says that the eldest Magi was white, the middle-aged one, yellow and the youngest, brown. Early Italian artists paid little attention to this, but by the time Tiepolo came to paint, the tradition had been fixed by the great Flemish artists, and here Tiepolo follows their example. (Insert slide 2) The second King, swathed in a great golden mantle, does have the air and demeanor of an Oriental; his head is bent as though lost in thought and meditation; his hands are encased within his sleeves in the manner considered courteous and proper in China. The young Ethiopian stands aloof, proud and lordly, with his hand on his hip; his carriage reveals his aristocracy. Arrayed in a red velvet hood and jacket, he seems to display the wealth of the East. Beside him, his aid and chief companion is craning his neck to get a good view of this Child they have come so far to see. The kneeling figure, near us but behind the Ethiopian, is his servant who carries his gift of myrrh. The servant kneeling in front of him carries the gift of the oldest of the Magi and beyond are two more retainers who carry gifts brought by the second king.

(Insert slide 3) The heart of the picture is the Babe upon His Mother's lap. The eldest of the Magi has literally prostrated himself at the feet of the Child as though he had flung himself down with complete abandon and in utter adoration. He has taken the foot of the Child in his hand and has lain his face upon the tender flesh of the chubby little leg in a gesture of love and sweet humility. This unheard-of attitude for a monarch greatly startles Joseph. He is shaken out of his impassive role of onlooker and guardian and quickly leans far forward to be sure that what he sees is actually being enacted. He has snatched off his hat in deference, astonishment and acknowledgement of the surpassing honor paid to the Child Jesus by this stranger.

The Virgin is truly regal in appearance and yet her expression, as she looks down upon him, likewise gives homage to the Child. Tiepolo gives neither the Babe nor His Mother the nimbus but by the stately bearing of the Virgin and the sweet simplicity of the Child, one could never doubt their identity.

How remarkable the contrast between the amazement of Joseph,

the humiliation of the Wise Men and the quiet serenity of the Virgin Mother!

(Return to slide 1) It is as great if not greater than that between the eldest of the Magi and the Ethiopian King but of what a different kind. Thus does the artist depict and remind us of the difference between the changelessness of the Divine and the individual differences of mankind.

(The following hymn may be read slowly and reverently by the leader as a closing prayer. It might be sung as a solo followed by a closing prayer by the leader.)

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, ever bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led to Thee.

As with joyous steps they sped
To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before
Him whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek thy mercy-seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
At the manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure, and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King.

—William C. Dix, 1837-1898.

THE MAN WHO GAVE US CHRISTMAS**by Winifred Kirkland****Reprinted with permission from the Atlantic Monthly Dec. 1939**

How many of us in the hurry and hubbub of the holiday season steal a few silent moments to consider where our Christmas comes from? Stories as beautiful as that of Christmas do not just happen, they have a source, they come from somewhere, they come from someone. When we stop to think and search for a sure but distant origin we shall find, contrary to the evidence of this mass-mad decade, that over and over again some far-off individual, man or woman, is responsible for giving the whole world some undying dream, a dream that can always be seen to have been long and courageously preserved within the dreamer's own undaunted soul. Yet this far-off bravery too often fails to stir us, because we seldom pause to look back, and remember.

From year to year we join in the singing of the old familiar carols, forgetting who recorded the very first Christmas hymns that have set the fashion for all that have followed. From year to year we listen while some voice reads, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord,' without remembering how high and holy and humble some far-off man must have kept his spirit before he could have perceived the ineffable loveliness of the Annunciation and shared a young mother's glory in a child-to-be. Every year we gather together, young and old, to construct the Christmas creche. We arrange the sheep, we place the kneeling shepherds, we crown with a halo the baby's head lying on the straw, but we forget the man who so revered the sacredness of common-place things that he dared to describe a God laid in a cattle trough for a cradle. We forget the man who gave us Christmas.

We do not know Luke well enough to say 'thank you' to him across the centuries. But we might know him better, and Christmas might mean more to us, if we tried to discover what it must first have meant to the man who gave it to us, gave it in all its perennial freshness and beauty to a world racked with war in his day and still racked with war in our day, in spite of the soaring, singing message of the two thousand Christmases that have come between. While in no sense did Luke invent the Christmas narrative, one can with truth say that it was he who gave us Christmas, for it was Luke, and Luke only, who searched out and found and preserved a birth story too humble for prouder historians to touch. It is said of Jesus the wayside preacher, that the common people heard him gladly. It may be said of Luke, the wayside doctor, that he heard the common people gladly. Was it these same common people who brought to Luke's knowledge the story of the first Christmas, re-

vealing to him perhaps the existence of some close-kept Aramaic document, or simply transmitting to him by word of mouth sacred and secret memories? The narrative of Jesus' birth seems to have been unknown to the earliest Christian Church, concentrated as that church was on its Founder's death and Resurrection. Who else but Luke would have listened? Who else in that day and hour revered humanity enough to accept the story of a God born in a stable and to give that story to the world?

Let us read once again the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel. Than let us pause to consider where our Christmas comes from, picture by picture, chant by chant. The most beautiful book in the world, so Renan has described the Gospel of Luke. And in that book, for sheer unearthly loveliness, the opening chapters are the most beautiful of all. Only a painter could have conceived the strange stark beauty of the scene in which the tall angel delivers his message to a wondering awe-struck girl. In fact, some early statues of Luke represent him as an actual artist, carrying palette and brushes. Only a dramatist could have seen and made us see that doorway meeting of two rapt women, one young, one old, each bearing beneath her heart a little child. Only a man attuned to music like a harp could have given us those immortal chants uttered by Zechariah and Mary and Simeon. The first thing, then, that we know about Luke is that he was a genius. The second thing we know is that, from the first written word of his Gospel to the last, Luke must have dedicated all his endowment to the delineation of an invisible Master, always, from Bethlehem's manger to the supper table of Emmaus,, alive and shining before his eyes.

We possess little enough information about Luke, but it seems to be generally accepted that he was a young doctor of Antioch, and a member of the Christian community there before he met Paul and joined that intrepid leader on his second missionary journey as his personal physician. Except for those intervals when his superior trusted him to carry out certain missionary undertakings by himself, Luke seems to have remained at Paul's side, at hand during Paul's two years' imprisonment in colonial Caesarea, and always within call during the longer incarceration in imperial Rome. There in Rome the two must have said a last farewell before Paul's martyrdom. Paul's description of his friend has become part of the world's vocabulary: 'Luke, the beloved physician.'

But this compressed account of a great Christian doctor who was to become a still greater Christian historian needs to be set against the more expanded background of Luke's place and time if we are to have even the scantiest knowledge of the man who gave us Christmas. There is no period so obscure, so difficult to penetrate with accuracy,

as the first century of modern times, now labeled A. D. But today these hidden decades are being penetrated with more and more patient research. Present-day scholars are suggesting fresh hypotheses about circumstances and people too long represented as already conclusively examined. Even Jesus himself comes alive with new challenge when the English scholar of today, Professor Thomas Walter Manson of Manchester, lecturing at Yale this very spring of 1939, presents a carefully documented and most stimulating new conception. As for Luke of Antioch there is a vast fresh area of deeply human conjecture opened by another scholar whose monumental study of the earliest foundations of our faith, *THE FOUR GOSPELS*, stands on the shelves of every religious library. Canon Streeter, whose tragic airship death will be instantly recalled by many, holds that the historian Luke must have gone up and down the Palestinian countryside garnering from the humble people of field and village priceless jewels of teaching, parable, incident, preaching, that the Great Teacher scattered prodigally to the wind as he passed by. Barely twenty years later Luke followed him. Streeter maintains that only by such sure and reverent tracing of Jesus' footsteps could Luke have come by the wealth of biographical material that he alone of the four Evangelists has been able to retrieve from oblivion and preserve for our knowledge.

Streeter's argument flashes a great searchlight of illumination upon Luke's own soul. There must have been some strange and beautiful magnetism about the man Luke, or the lowly people of the harsh upland pastures of Judea and the sun-swept vineyards about Galilee would not have opened to him their most sacred memories of the eternal Wayfarer. If it be only guesswork to suggest that Luke actually went about gathering much material for his book from humble people who recalled Jesus, still it is guesswork based on the evidence of the type of material he gathered and the type of man he seems to have been. Certain great parables and great incidents which had deathless effect on all Christian idealism are found in Luke alone. What toilworn peasant on some solitary hillside poured into Luke's eager ears the story of the Prodigal Son? What stooping trudger by on some burning highroad straightened before Luke's earnest inquiries and imparted to him the recollection of that thrilled long-ago moment when as a youth he had heard Jesus, steadfast on his last black journey, utter that scathing parable of rebuke to the taunting questioner who had asked, 'And who is my neighbor?' It must have been in some such way that Luke came by his immortal story of the Good Samaritan. What obscure witness of a horror twenty years past recalled and described to Luke the last friend and the humblest that Jesus made on earth, one forever remembered by every one of us, but recorded by Luke alone, the Penitent Thief? And where and how and when did Luke learn of a baby God cradled in a manger?

But one cannot press on into Luke's mind and heart without first sketching what must have gone to the making of that mind and heart years before Luke had so much as heard of the hero of his great biography. Now just how did the wide-flung, powerful, but curiously disillusioned pagan Empire of Rome first come to hear about the mysterious occurrences in one of its remotest provinces? The first news the pagan world received about the Man who was destined to change the very name of history from his day to ours was sudden and sharp and unbelievable. From a mysteriously radiant and intrepid little band of Hebrew fishermen, people began to hear about a dead Leader who had utterly transformed their lives by the new laws he had laid down for all living. This Leader had died a most shameful death as a crucified criminal. But no, he had not really died at all! In spite of careful burial and a tomb sealed with the official Roman insignia, he had come back! His humble friends had seen him! They asserted that he was with them at this very moment, alive! . . . as he could be with anyone, so they asserted, who desired him enough to obey his laws for living, a method and practice so fresh and surprising that throughout the Empire the new sect, everywhere spreading and finally upclimbing from the humble to the high, was coming to be called simply The Way.

Nobody at first took the trouble to write the story of Jesus of Nazareth, for the simple reason that he himself had said that he would come back. His first followers took that promise of his literally. Only slowly, as the years went by, did they realize that Jesus was speaking, not of his physical return, but of his abiding spiritual presence in his world. Then the Good News of Jesus the Christ, which had first been told by flaming preaching, began to be written down here and there, wherever the message had come to be known, in scattered fugitive documents, which slowly coalesced into four books finally accepted as authoritative by the small new congregations, often secret, now swiftly forming the habit of assemblage in the name of The Way. Thus humbly the Christian Church began, steadily shaping its liturgy, its chants, its prayers.

But the Christian Church was in existence before its Gospels, as we possess them today. Our Gospels are the account of those aspects of Christ's life, and those words of his message which had previously been tried and tested and proved to be vital by the usage of myriad little churches springing up all over the Empire, at first hidden away, for the most part, from the proud intellectual ruling classes. These classes at first regarded askance a new religious leader who had been legally executed on a charge of sedition against the brief but secure and comfortable international orderliness of that period.

But the first century was not yet half gone before the new faith

was attracting the attention of some among the educated and the high-born. Of these, young Doctor Luke of Antioch was one. Another was his Excellency Theophilus of Rome. To this Theophilus Luke dedicated his twin books, his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Luke addressed a preface to Theophilus indicating the nature of his researches and the purposes of his book: 'Because many historians have undertaken a narrative of the mysterious events that form the basis of our faith, as these events have been transmitted to us by those who were actually present at them, I myself have now resolved to set down a record of the Christian message authenticated by all the investigation possible to me, in order that you and others like you may have a true and detailed presentation of matters you have hitherto ascertained by word of mouth.'

Thus there came into existence a book which to this day presents the supreme appeal of Christianity to all paganism past or present. The universality of the Christian faith is revealed by the fact that Luke's book was written by a Greek to a Roman about a Jew.

III

But what had gone into the making of Luke the man before he could become equipped to make his book? Luke had first been child and lad and man in Antioch before he had so much as heard of Jesus of Nazareth. Luke was perhaps a boy in his middle teens when in famous Jerusalem, two hundred miles distant, a certain mysterious malefactor was put to death. One cannot ascertain just how soon afterwards the news of this cruel death and the triumphant Resurrection from a felon's grave reached the receptive ears of the young Luke, but by the year 50 Luke seems to have become a well-known member of the Antioch group of Jesus' followers.

The Antioch of Luke's day was a large and prosperous city, an important transportation centre for the long caravan routes, as well as the repository of a Greek culture established by Alexander the Great two centuries before. Antioch was a seaport; the boy Luke would have been familiar with ships and sailors. Many foreigners walked the streets of this flourishing metropolis; the boy Luke might have picked up the native speech of the villagers as they pressed into town, some of them speaking Aramaic, the language of Palestine, the language of Jesus. Luke, well-to-do and educated with all the liberality of Greek custom, probably had first-hand knowledge of the Old Testament, long before translated into Greek and widely circulated among Greek-speaking Jews, of whom there were very many scattered throughout the first-century Roman Empire. The large Jewish colony in Antioch was broad-minded in its outlook, would have had happy friendships that

perhaps supplied Luke with his intimate understanding of Hebrew ways and customs. Luke's writing shows him to have had an eager and adventurous delight in travel. We can imagine him when a boy as taking tramps of investigation in the environs of Antioch. But both within and without the city he would have observed want and suffering to which he would never have been indifferent. Gifted, educated, well-born, and well-to-do, Luke was free to choose his own career. He looked at suffering, and he chose to be a doctor.

In Luke's after years he must often have recalled the peace and joyousness, the freedom and sanity, of his Antioch background, much as many of us today look back wistfully and gratefully to the world we knew before 1914. In Antioch, Luke in childhood and early maturity was privileged to form foundations of normal thinking and normal living. The Christian group to which he came to belong was dominated by the wise and kindly Barnabas, one of the first to trust and befriend Paul after Paul's strange sudden conversion from persecutor to missionary. Barnabas had even brought Paul to Antioch. Barnabas' warm welcome to all young Greeks was well known. In Antioch, Luke could also have known Silas and Mark. Early in his career as a Christian doctor he appears to have joined a relief expedition from the Antioch church to Jerusalem, carrying a cargo of wheat to that city stricken with famine. It may have been on this visit that Luke met people prominent among those earliest Jerusalem Christians—Peter, James, John; Mary, the mother of Mark, in whose upper room the Last Supper was celebrated; and probably that greater Mary, the mother of Jesus. Some dozen years later Luke again accompanied Paul to Jerusalem on a mission of kindness, taking a gift of money to the Temple treasury. On one of Luke's visits to Jerusalem, many people think he must have known Mary the mother of Jesus, and from her received directly some of the most intimate details of his story of Christmas.

The second visit to the sacred city was from the first ill-omened. Paul had become most unpopular with the Jerusalem Christians because of his friendliness with the Gentiles. James, the brother of Jesus, who was at this time Bishop of Jerusalem, advised Paul to go slowly, to give proof of his fidelity, to placate his enemies. However, almost at once the dreaded circumstances occurred, and Paul was mobbed within the Temple precincts, to be rescued by the Roman guard and sent for safety, with an accompanying battalion of soldiers, to the colonial governor's seat at Caesarea and the fortress prison there. Paul was to remain in Caesarea for two long years, from 56 to 58. During all this time Luke was not only in constant attendance upon the prisoner, but ceaselessly working for his release. Vainly. At the end of two years

Paul made his famous direct appeal to the Emperor, and was sent to Rome, never to be freed except by death.

For Luke and for us the two years at Caesarea were to have priceless significance, for it is most probable that it was during this sojourn there, when Luke could move about freely even though in constant attendance upon a famous prisoner, that the third Evangelist gained his full knowledge of the birth story of Jesus.

If we let conjecture play a searchlight back on the middle years of the first century we may perhaps presume humbly to guess where and how and from whom Luke came to his knowledge of the first Christmas. As one of the earliest of the great research scholars of history, Luke would have followed a procedure then rare, but now long taken for granted. Luke we know made certain visits to Jerusalem, and he may well have made more such visits than we know. It seems most probable that in Jerusalem he would have sought out Mary, the mother of Jesus. Luke's own book of Acts explicitly states that Mary was in one of the early church communities in the holy city. If we try, we can surmise Mary's own accents as an undertone to Luke's Christmas chronicle.

At Jerusalem, Luke was within easy distance of the village of Bethlehem. From much internal evidence we know that he respected humble people, and listened to their reminiscences. It is not too far-fetched, then, to fancy his listening to some aging shepherd who recalled the angel hymn of his boyhood. In some such manner of direct first-hand research Luke may have supplemented an early Aramaic document describing the miracle of Jesus' coming into the world. All scholars seem to agree that Luke actually had in his hand some such ancient scroll, the existence of which they maintain is supported by the arresting differences between the nativity stories and the rest of Luke's Gospel. Chapter III opens to a fresh beginning; there is an abrupt break in continuity. There are also notable differences in style. There is a studied effort to use simple archaic Greek, as if the translator, who was also profoundly an artist in words, were trying to put himself and his reader back into the simple terms and manner of thought of a previous generation, hidden away in the hill country of Judea.

In Caesarea, Luke would have had priceless leisure both to collect his material and to make some preliminary arrangement of it. In Caesarea, too, he would have had invaluable association with Philip, and with Philip's four gifted daughters, 'prophetesses'—that is to say, accepted teachers and interpreters of the new faith. Undoubtedly Philip's daughters would have known Mary in Jerusalem before they had come to settle in Caesarea. One cannot calculate what wealth of memories they might there have transmitted to Luke

But the man Luke, the man who gave us Christmas, what deeper guesses dare we make about him, about his own soul and about his patient perfection of that soul until he was equipped to become the perpetual proclaimer of glad tirings to men? Scholarship and Biblical research afford us only a rough scaffold on which to build our conjecture, a scaffold in itself frankly conjectural. In addition to the scant life history here given, it is supposed that after Paul's death, which may have occurred in 64 as an earliest date, in 68 as a latest one, Luke eventually returned to Palestine, presumably to revise and complete his projected manuscript. At this time the long-smouldering Jewish revolt against Rome flamed to madness, and was tragically punished. The age-old citadel of the Hebrew religion was razed; of the Temple not one stone remained upon another. Luke's Gospel is now dated about 80 A. D. Luke is supposed to have died in the province of Bithynia in the first nineties.

Indeed, all this is a fragmentary basis of fact on which to build suppositions that dares to penetrate the personality of the man who gave us Christmas! But he has left the world a book which reveals himself as well as his Master. Research supplies us with certain probable facts, and we may employ human insight and sympathy in interpreting them. The bare facts of Luke's life point to certain conclusions about his character. Even the most cursory examination of Luke's Gospel and the most superficial study of his life suggests at once his singular fitness for giving the world its Christmas.

It was the 'beloved physician' who could describe motherhood in all the holiness of our Christmas narratives. It was one who had given all his being to the service of others, and who was never to hold a child of his own in his arms, who could set down the raptured words, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.' It was one whose life was consecrated to the relief of suffering who could describe with such exaltation Jesus's miracles of healing. Long before he had ever heard of the mysterious man executed in a distant city, Luke, a joyous-hearted young Greek, must have chosen a career of kindness. He had himself gone about doing good before he was equipped to write of all the wealth of kindly deeds and sympathetic words that he records in his life of Jesus. Of all four Evangelists, it is Luke who best reveals Jesus the man, friend always of the poor and the downtrodden, comforting even the despairing thief crucified beside him, as Luke alone tells us. It is a joyous human Jesus that Luke presents, probably because he himself had learned high joy in his close contact with an unseen Master. In spite of all its tragedy, Luke's Gospel gives the reader a sense of unconquerable gladness, gladness like that of the two disciples on the walk to Emmaus when their Master returned to share a meal with them,

an incident that Luke has saved from oblivion. Truly Luke was mysteriously fitted to transmit to us forever the joyousness of Christmas.

But it could never have been a carefree Luke who wrote down these sweet strange Christmas stories. It must have been a Luke who had drunk to the dregs the cup of despair, who had beheld evil triumph in holy places, and who had seen the dream Jesus died for apparently blotted out in blood. It was after Paul's martyrdom—after, and not before—that Luke's Gospel was finished and given to the world. It was after, not before, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. that Luke, the doctor-scholar, ended his consecrated research into the life of his Hero, and made it public. With all the world Luke had witnessed the downfall of the old stronghold of Judaism, and the hounding of Jerusalem rebels from one precarious hiding to another. He never completed the Acts of the Apostles to include Paul's martyrdom. Was it that the 'beloved physician' was too heartbroken to add the final death-dealing chapters about his dearest friend? If Luke was perhaps thirty-five, already proved a successful doctor and a trusted teacher of the new faith when he joined Paul about 50 A. D., then, when he was reverently bringing his book to a close in the seventies of the first century, he must have been aging toward his own seventies. In spirit he may have shared Simeon's delight in the vision of the newborn babe of hope. We know that the infancy narratives do not seem to have been generally known to the early church. It is Luke the doctor-evangelist who has made them a part of our Christian faith.

But what had these sacred stories of a holy little child meant to Luke himself in his darkening world? Persecution was rife. For all we know, Luke may have written in the very shadow of his own martyrdom; some ancient authorities say that he was martyred. From the end of Palestine the armies of Rome had gone raging and avenging. No one could count the fallen dead that Luke's pen might have recorded but did not. Instead, Luke, an old unbroken man, sent forth from the stricken world of his day to our stricken world of today the deathless hope of an angel hymn, and the deathless promise of a newborn child.

THE FAITH THAT WAS BORN AT CHRISTMAS

By The Reverend Gordon M. Torgerson, minister

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Ridgewood, New Jersey

No people ever lived longer with hopes and dreams than did the Jews. Always it seemed they had only hopes and dreams. For seven hundred years they had heard the words about a coming Messiah. Rabbis always said, "and the government shall be upon His shoulder . . . and of the increase of His government there shall be no end. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

For seven hundred wearying years they repeated those words of Isaiah to themselves. But dream it was alone. The hope was never satisfied, yet it never died. It was the one bright hope in a world of fear.

Occasionally it was whispered that the Messiah had come, and the people would throng the ancient cities of the East. Always they were slain or terrorized.

There was a glimmering of this hope; but ever present was the dread of the world, a dread of such people as King Herod. He it was who slew his wife, Marianne, killed his uncle, slaughtered his two sons on suspicion of their usurping his throne—And whispering to one another men would say, "It is better to be Herod's swine than his sons."

On a still, clear Judean night rumor had it the Savior was born. Couriers of the king bore the message to the palace, and again plans were drawn for a reign of terror. But in the darkness of that night and in the darkness of human affairs, Jesus was born, with the confirming words: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And in the hush of the evening a heavenly choir exaltingly sang "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace good will toward men."

While temple police hurried about to post notices for the Roman legions—to alert—and while Herod snarled his orders—in quiet simplicity, bedded in straw, was the child wrapped in swaddling clothes. Soon to that lowly manger were to come the shepherds from the hills and the wise men from the ancient East, bearing their costly gifts as they bowed before one come from God.

When shepherds and wise men had left and the chill of the evening bade them all find rest, Joseph slept and dreamed. He was warned of God that they should take the child and flee from Herod and go to Egypt. And so in stealth the majestic setting changes, and two fugitives bearing a tiny baby escape through desert wastes to the southland.

And when Herod saw that he was mocked of the wise men, he was exceedingly wroth and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof, all the children from two years old and under. And only when Herod was dead could Mary and Joseph and the little child dare to return to Nazareth.

That starlit night the procession of shepherds and wise men had been a glorious interlude in the terrors of men. It was an evening of peace in an era of evil. And then, it all began again. Only a few years later the sinuous whirling dancer was to claim for her evening's pay the head of John the Baptist. Not long after that, outside Jerusalem on the hill that looked like a skull, Calvary, they drained the life of Christ. In rapid succession, Peter was slain, Paul was killed, early Christian congregations tortured or massacred; and before the first century was out, in 97 A. D. an insensitive Roman general demolished all Jerusalem. That was like a final curtain on an episode of beauty in a tragic drama called life.

Standing in the distance of the years, men could ask, "What now of the words, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy'? Wasn't it all just a beautiful sentiment—delightful delusion—a moment of poetry in the harrowing prose of life?" So many believe that, —fantasy, not fact.

This past week four young people walked down Ridgewood Avenue and saw our church bulletin board bearing the words, "Tuesday, eight p. m.—What Do We Say About the Miracles?" They came to the service. Not one was a Christian. They were not bitter or vengeful—they just did not believe. They were fine young people, healthy questioners; but when it came to Jesus, they wondered if it wasn't just a dazzling account, a beautiful story, and that was all. Why, they asked, believe in the miraculous birth of Christ and narrowly ignore similar stories about the birth of Plato, Zoroaster, Isis, or the rest?

There had been no narrow exclusion of any other life. If all there was in the Christmas story was the birth of a baby, a beautiful story, with wonderment settling on the hills of Judea, it would end there, just as the cult of Isis, Zoroaster, and others, have died—only the most fabulous readers have ever heard of them.

The faith of Christmas is not simply a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. The truth of Christmas is that a faith was born, and that faith, in that life, was more miraculous than men have ever known. Jesus does not live because of his birth—we remember his birth because of the way he lived.

Those shepherds and wise men bowed only to a babe in a manger. But all we have gone through in two thousand years under the control

of perverted satanic human nature in the form of the Caesars, the Napoleons, the Kaisers, the Hitlers—makes us bow to that life and that faith with an adoration that is more profound than those wise men could ever have dreamed.

Confronted by the Christmas story and the faith it brought to birth we stand speechless till the halting words come:

"I know not how the Bethlehem's babe
Could in the Godhead be;
I only know that manger child
Has brought God's life to me.

I know not how the Calvary's cross
A world from sin could free;
I only know its matchless love
Has brought God's love to me."

The unending miracle of it! To think of the lowly birth, the life by the majority despised in its service, killed—and yet it continued to grow. Thirty-five years after a Calvary a Roman historian wrote in astonishment and indignation, because the Christian movement had gone so long unstopped: "This persistent superstition, though checked for the time being, broke out afresh, and not only in Judea, where the mischief started, but also at Rome, where all manner of horrible and loathsome things pour in and become fashionable."

Born in a back street stable, living as a simple peasant a life distinguished only by love and humility, that Jesus' influence went on is simply incredible. There is no way to explain it except to say that Jesus dwelt among men as the human life of God. No matter what occurs, the Christlike spirit—the faith of Christmas—must always triumph. As one of our presidents said after an idealistic piece of legislation was lost, "The best things of life are crucified and put in a tomb, but they always have their third day."

Wise men still worship, for they know there was more than the birth of a child—there is the birth of a faith, the faith that prompts men to say that the heart of man is able to receive the indwelling Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . . If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

"Though Christ in a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If he's not born in thee,
Thy soul is still forlorn."

What was this faith that was born at Christmas? He who came on Christmas Day taught that the ideal can be lived. Not only can, but must. **That faith** is absolutely essential to victorious life. It does no good

to have an ideal that is always out of reach—but man is victorious when those ideals are clothed in the flesh and blood of reality.

Much of the Christmas story has been said before. But Jesus lived it. He converted principle into example, and he showed that when that is done something happens. On that Christmas Day was born a practical religion. The great Christian philosopher of the last century, Emmanuel Kant, was talking about Jesus and the fact that he lived what he talked about. Said Kant, "To establish the ideal society of rational beings we have only to act as though we already belonged to that society, there to apply the perfect law to the imperfect state. Only thus did we cease to be beasts and begin to be gods."

The trouble with most faith is that it is cautious and calculating, and practical idealism is not the vogue. But there was born at Christmas the ideal that can be lived.

There was nothing new about ideals. It was new that the ideal was the only real way life could be lived. The faith was born that first Christmas day. There was also born a belief in mankind. The word Incarnation means the coming of God in human life. Jesus was God Incarnate. And we must remember that God appearing in human life is an exaltation of humanity. The human body can never again be seen in the same light when once you see that it is to be used to house the spirit of God. That faith said every little child was significant in the kingdom. It said life was so dear to the heart of God that Jesus would lay down his life for men. John so caught the spirit of Christmas that jubilantly he cried, "Now are we the sons of God." Sons of God!

The great preacher Cornelius Woelfkin told of a family in his church whose boy was going away to college. The day the lad was to leave, they had their family prayer at the noon table, and the father committed the ways of that boy to God. Later they went to the train at Grand Central; as they were bidding farewell, the mother and father did not enumerate all the things that should be done or not done—the father just quietly and simply said, "Never forget whose son you are."

That is the faith that was born at Christmas. Sons of God—sons of God are we all.

"I know not how the Bethlehem's babe
Could in the Godhead be;
I only know the manger child
Has brought God's life to me."
I know not how the Calvary's cross
A world from sin could free;
I only know its matchless love
Has brought God's love to me".

CHRISTMAS STORIES

Wars are at best, if there ever could be any good points, are the most tragic invention of our civilization. Twice in the lives of most of us we have had to see the youth of our nation offer themselves for the safeguarding of our way of life. Many of them came up through the fruitful years of the new impetus on youth activities in our churches. They had been taught that wars never settle anything and that the Christ way of love was the only plausible and lasting way for men to live abundantly and in charity with each other. Richard Dwenger, called "Dick" by his friends, was a product of this age. Filled with the ambitions which only youth can have, seeking his place in life, he turned to a career of writing. And then the war came. Along with the millions of other American youth and yet hating war, he decided that defending his country was the only way to strike back at the forces he hated, greed, fear, prejudice, privation and want.

Richard Dwenger was aboard a United States Destroyer when it was sunk somewhere in the Mediterranean October 10, 1943.

THERE WAS NO ROOM, THREE GIFTS and A CHRISTMAS STORY written by "Dick" for his mother, Mrs. H. B. Swenger bring to our minds this Christmas our need to carry out the real ideals for which he lived and died.

THERE WAS NO ROOM

It was late in the afternoon on the hills outside Bethlehem. The sun had been hot and hazy all day, the air limp, the olive-green trees dusty and listless. But now a soft gentle breeze moved up from Galilee, trembling the thick dusty leaves, and the shepherds on the hillside rose and stretched and gazed absently at their flocks nearby, and past them to the town in the distance below.

A young couple, weary from the heat of the day, moved slowly along the lane of dust and white bleached stone which wandered down the fold of the hill to the town of Bethlehem beyond. The woman was quietly seated on the methodical donkey and her husband as quietly walked ahead, leading the animal.

On seeing the shepherds the husband stopped, murmured a moment with the woman, his wife, and then called to the men.

"That is Bethlehem ahead, is it not?"

"It is", one of them replied.

The man beside his wife hesitated, and then continued.

"Know you an inn where we might stay the night? We're simple people and have little money".

The shepherds shifted in their positions, each reluctant to volunteer a suggestion for fear his companions would dispute his choice. Finally one muttered, looking elsewhere,

"You could go to the Golden Crown I suppose."

"Not any longer you can't" another objected dryly.

"It's as good as any these days. All are full".

Another spoke, "That man no longer caters to simple people. His eyes are on 'bigger' things."

The others grunted, disliking the inn-keeper. The young husband spoke again:

"The Golden Crown you say? We have come to register for the census".

"So has all Judea."

"Yes; go there. You might as well."

"Thank you," the husband said.

And the man and his wife, with their donkey, moved on, slowly. The shepherds moodily watched them.

"She's pregnant," one said

There was a pause.

"The Golden Crown would be no place to have a child," another remarked. The men grunted; then left to seek their flocks.

The inn-keeper of the Golden Crown was named Iscah, and he was heavy-set and flabby, with a dull, resentful, self-pitying face. He stood in the doorway beneath his tavern sign, his apron on, his arms folded, and stared resentfully as a rich caravan plodded past his inn, with the bare-footed children running alongside, shouting, and the heavy dust hanging in the hot air, to settle again, like long spray against rocks, in wait for the next arrival.

"They would not stop here; no, not here," he said testily to an old man, his crony, hunched on a bench in front of the inn, feeling the late sun. "They must go elsewhere; not here."

"Wait, Iscah," the old man replied, "There will be enough for all." Iscah continued to glower at the caravan. "I will have nothing to do with the common people though," he said. "Not if no one stops here. My wife's cousin, Pontias Pilate, who will soon be established in Jerusalem, time and again he says 'tell your husband not to bother with anyone unimportant. Wash your hands of them', he says. 'A man must build up a rich trade to make good . . .'"

The old man on the bench nodded.

"Wash your hands of them he says," Iscah repeated approvingly. And then musing—"Perhaps Pilate will stay here some day. Then they'll have something to talk about in this town; eh, old one?"

The old man nodded, smiling. "Wait Iscah. Your time will come. You know what you're doing."

Iscah vacantly picked his teeth.

The young tired couple, with their methodical little donkey, moved up the street toward the inn.

"I suppose they think they're going to stay here," Iscah growled.

The old man chuckled.

The couple stopped, and the husband modestly approached Iscah.

"Yes?", Iscah said, resentfully.

"We would stay the night please.

Iscah shook his heart shortly. "I'm full. No room."

The man hesitated, "You have no room?"

"No room, I said. No room. Don't worry my man, you rustics all pick up our speech soon enough."

The old man on the bench chuckled.

The husband, tired and quiet, turned to his wife. She smiled at him gently.

Iscah moved impatiently. "What do you want me to do: write it out for you? Go along now. There are other places."

The woman murmured, smiling, "We've come a long way today . . ."

"So you can go still further. The sun's not set. I have no room."

Iscah looked stolidly over their heads at the streets behind them.

Once more the husband hesitated. "Perhaps your stable . . .?" he said gently.

"What about my stable?"

"Only that my wife expects a child almost hourly. She is very tired from our journey. If we could but stay the night . . ."

Iscah wiped his hot face exasperated. "What must I do to make it plain to you people, ah? What do I have to do?"

At that moment his son, Elam, appeared from behind him and went to the young husband.

"There is room in the stable," he murmured.

"I did not say so . . ." Iscah objected.

"Come with me," the youth said, smiling shyly at the woman.

"You'll pay the regular rate, mind you!" Iscah shouted. "And be careful of your lamps! And it's for one night. One night only! You hear?"

The husband nodded meekly, murmuring thanks, and then he and his wife, he leading the donkey, followed the son Elam around the house.

Iscah spat into the dust, irritable. "And that's to whom I should leave my inn, the Golden Crown. A pretty place it will be when he manages it. A pretty place indeed."

The old man nodded. Iscah again muttered 'a pretty place' and then lapsed into a dull resentful silence, staring in front of him.

A star fixed, gleaming perfection shone in the powder-blue sky as it hovered over Bethlehem, above the inn, the Golden Crown.

Iscah glowered at the dust in the street. "It gets worse each year, this dust," he said and the old man nodded in agreement.

But as the cool of the evening came in on the breeze from Galilee and the shadows lengthened from the trees and softened the hillside, the shepherds noticed the star and exclaimed pointing.

And later that evening three men from the East hurried along the same road on camels that the young couple had earlier trod with their donkey. And by now Elam had brought lamps and blankets and a jug of water and bread and meat to the stable, smuggling them all from his father's inn, and the young woman lay on a cot of straw, her hands clenched white as she gave birth to her child. The cows stared vacantly, slowly munching, while this tired young wife gazed at two musty, ancient beams of wood which formed a cross in the roof above her head. And once when Joseph was engaged elsewhere, Elam poured her a cup of cool water and as he held it to her lips, she smiled at him and barely nodded, her eyes grateful.

The three men from the East hurried into the inn, the Golden Crown, and asked in low excited tones if a woman were there in labour. Iscah protested this fantastic question but eagerly proffered the best rooms in the inn, as the men wore jewels on thier fingers. The men seemed not to listen to him.

"Think man, think" one said. "A woman . . . undoubtedly with her husband . . ."

"Oh! Oh yes! In the stable, in back," and then he repeated his offer of hospitality for themselves.

The men looked at one another and slowly shook their heads; then hurried to the stoble.

Elam bowed out humbly and watched through a window as the men knelt beside the pallet of straw and placed their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh at the foot of this bed on which a tired young woman lay. The woman smiled at the men, not speaking, while her husband kept humbly in the background, embarrassed at his own feeling of unworthiness.

At last the men from the East left, silently, reverently, their faces grave and troubled, as though weighed with the realization of years to come.

And then the young woman turned to her husband and spoke for the first time that evening. "Joseph", he knelt beside her and pressed her hands to his face. "Mary" . . . he whispered. His wife gazed at his bent head and smiled. "We shall call him Jesus . . ." she said, and Joseph, her husband nodded, his head still bent, his lips touching her fingers. Mary, his wife, again turned her eyes to the rough wooden cross of beams above her head. She was silent a long while, then once again murmured "Jesus."

A CHRISTMAS STORY

Each year before Christmas the women decorated the church. Nobody ever wanted the job—there were so many other things to do: there were last-minute presents yet to buy; there was the house to put in order for the arrival of all the relatives on Christmas Day; a new stand for the Christmas tree was needed—and a very poor tree it was this year, skimpy, and it cost far too much; and most of the balls were broken from last year, and an incredible number of people had sent cards who hadn't been on the list at all, and there was the food to think about and that box of salted nuts that Harold must be reminded to bring out from New York and . . . well Christmas was really too tiring, that's all, and nobody wanted the bother of being responsible for decorating the church.

But at last, toward the end of a cold, deep-blue winter afternoon, it was done. Some thought those candles on the platform would look papist, but it was done now and there was the train to meet and the supper toget and the fear that Macy's had come and nobody'd been home.

The aisles of the church, and especially around the pulpit, were strewn with leaves and berries from the wreaths, but Adam the janitor could be counted on to clean it up. He was old now, Adam was, almost too old, but really indispensable. Nothing was too much trouble for him, be it moving chairs or tables or fixing lights or hurrying around the corner for two dozen more rolls when they found they were running short. He was persistently cheerful always—especially around Christmas and Easter, when the church looked the best and the most people came. Eccentric, perhaps; he talked to himself, but then he was old—and he could play the organ too, only he'd been forbidden to do that ever since the time it had broken while he was playing it. They were first going to discharge him, but he was really indispensable and he promised not to ever touch it again and he hadn't meant to do it and it probably wasn't his fault anyway, and he was pitifully contrite about it all and he was an old man, so . . . it was funny he could play the organ. No one seemed to know where he'd ever learned it, but . . . anyway, it was time to meet the train, unless the car was frozen. The battery should have been re-charged weeks ago. The women left.

The young minister heard them go and quit his study to walk slowly into the church. It was almost dark, although the stained, symbolic windows were softly illuminated by the icy pallor of winter sunset. It was very still. He stood in front of the pulpit, musing and troubled, then slowly walked up the centre aisle to sit in the last pew and stare at the shrouded, soft temple before him.

Temple? He wondered. He had taken this church two years before with the highest Christian determination. He wondered. There were

overflowing throngs on Christmas and the New Year's and Easter and Thanksgiving; chairs in the back and along the side aisles. He wondered . . . He wondered what he would say to them on Christmas morning. He knew what they expected him to say, knew what conventionally he should say and what every other minister in town would say. The sublime birth of Jesus Christ, The Son of God. He Who had come into the world to redeem mankind; the glory of His advent and the beginning of the Christian religion which in two thousand years has spread to every corner of the globe, binding man to man with its transcendent fellowship of meaning. The historic and immortal and inevitable beauty and significance of His birth.

But the minister was troubled. Constantly, despite himself, such parts of the Bible as the Sermon on the Mount pressed against his mind.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? . . . "

"Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven . . . "

"Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth . . . "

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon . . . "

"Therefore I say unto you, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on'. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?' Why take thought of raiment?"

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you . . . "

"By their fruits ye shall know them . . . "

The minister sighed, wearily, heavily; discouraged. He knew he could not tell them that after they left this church, while they ate, heartily and merrily, they should rather remember that Christmas for countless others is just another day of insufficient food and insufficient clothes and the sickening immediacy of next month's rent; that a Christmas basket does nothing to remedy that; that there is but one answer to the vitally fundamental question, "Am I my brother's keeper?", that Christ ate and preferred to eat with publicans and sinners; nor could he ask them in the midst of what stratum of people would Christ eat His Christmas dinner were He alive today . . . The minister was a young minister and he needed his job. He sighed, wearily and heavily, and stared at his church before him.

Adam the janitor slowly moved into the church and stood still before the pulpit. He wondered about Adam. He could play the organ.

Curious. Perhaps Adam had wanted to be a great organist and never had the chance to study. "Many a desert flower is born to blush unseen . . ." Why should there be a desert, ever? Perhaps if Adam had had a chance to study he would have been a great organist. Curious thought.

But now Adam was glancing about the church, timidly, fearfully, working his hands, distraught. The minister sat slumped in the back pew and remained unseen. What was the matter with the man? Should he go to him. He was about to arise and call his name when Adam, suddenly talking to himself and shaking his head, started hurriedly up the steps to the organ. The minister checked himself and watched. Was he going to play the organ? He'd been forbidden. Adam almost feverishly manipulated the stops, talking to himself and shaking his head, and then started to play. He played softly one Christmas hymn after another. "Silent Night, Holy Night . . ." "O Little Town of Bethlehem . . ." Adam was quiet now and faintly smiling. He occasionally nodded to himself as he played. The last streaks of sunset from a window behind caught his head and gave him a strange gentle appearance.

The minister sat there and knew his eyes were filled with tears. He knew also that had he been asked to speak at that moment he could not have done so.

And suddenly he knew his Christmas sermon in all its simplicity; knew it was the one sermon he could or should give. He would stand very quietly and then start to speak in low, murmured tones the story of Jesus' birth.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night . . ."

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger . . ."

"There was no room for them in the inn . . ."

"There came wise men from the east . . . and when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they prescribed unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh . . ."

"Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased . . ."

And then he would wait and say in simple tones to his congregation:

"Let us hesitate long before we call Christmas the joyous season . . ."

Let us not forget that but a few years later Jesus Christ was crucified on the Cross in the flesh.

Let us ask ourselves at this moment with extreme inner honesty: Do we try with our uttermost to prevent, and have we prevented, the crucifixion of Christ in the Spirit?

Amen . . ."

THREE GIFTS

The apartment was small and shabby and what's more they had three children. There was enough furniture, alright, but it was pretty cheap; the kind you get in a clearance sale on Third Avenue. He remembered the day he had gone down and bought it; a Saturday afternoon it was, and they figured up they had just enough money for it, and then the man told them they didn't including the sales tax, of course, and they'd have to pay for the cartage and they hadn't figured on that but they said, casual-like; they guess that would be alright, but oh if he had only known. They got it in the end, though. You always get things like that in the end, whether you can afford to pay for them or not. You don't see how you can but you do and that's that. You gotta have something in this life. That radio there; that had cost too much and hadn't stood up, either; neither had the furniture, for that matter, but it was too late now. You get what you pay for.

He didn't mind usually. There was just so much could be done on a taxi driver's salary and no more. Jane knew that when she married him; and she'd certainly done miracles. There were curtains, and the prints of pictures, and even branches of bayberries around; and three kids. Nor did they mind the three kids. No sir; they had no regrets about having them; not for a minute. There wasn't a penny for extras and it was a nip and tuck all the time, but those kids could never say that they hadn't eaten; that there hadn't been a place for them to sleep in; that they hadn't clothes to wear. Not the best, maybe, but they hadn't been without, either; never; and that's a lot.

The thought consoled him, usually; that had seemed enough, usually; but not tonight because it was Christmas eve and all they had was one measly present for the kids, one each, and a little skinny two foot tree perched on the living room table. There just wasn't any more money, that's all. It's all right to talk about a Christmas fund, but when you haven't got it to put away what are you going to do. The kids didn't seem to mind—they hung a few icicles of silver paper on the scrawny stub of a tree and then started to fish out from something that looked like an over sized egg box a couple of red decoration balls they had bought at

Woolworth's, but Jim, their pop said "Ah, cut it out. It looks bad enough as it is."

The children stopped abashed. "Jim, what's the matter with you?" his wife said. "It does, that's all. They're meant for a big tree; not that cheap little thing there." His older boy Danny said "This is a good tree, Pop. What do we care?"

Jane took her husband by the arm and led him toward the kitchen. "Come in here," she said firmly. The children were hesitant in their movements for a moment and then chattered away again. "Now," Jane said, her back to the kitchen door, "What's the matter with you, anyway?" Her husband's hand cuffed irritably at the edge of the kitchen table, "Ah, it's nothing only—what's the use of pretending to celebrate Christmas when you can't? All you're doing is kidding yourself" His wife said gently "They're enjoying themselves, Jim . . ." "Nah, they're not. They're good sports, that's all. They're pretending they don't care; but did you ever see a kid that didn't?" "It's not your fault, I know, but it gets me sore, that's all. Look at this guy Max up the street. He's crooked. That's all he is; but wait 'til you see the presents his kids will get. Bicycles, mechano sets, trains—our kids will probably be ashamed to leave the house."

Jane was angry for his sake. "Well they won't have to be ashamed of how their father got the money." "So what?" There was a weary, utterly discouraged note in Jim's voice. "They get the presents, don't they?" And so it went.

Jane finally persuaded him to return to the living room, and the first thing that was said was from Jill, the youngest of the family, the girl, who wanted to know what happened now.

Her father's voice was ironic and bitterly edged. "That's all there is, my friend", he said. "There ain't no more."

But Jill pursued. "Well, Santa Claus will be here later on, won't he?" The two older children were silent. They wouldn't have told Jill that there was no Santa Claus for anything, but they also knew that there were no more presents and that the remark hurt their parents.

Jim's wife said softly, "Sometimes Santa Claus don't get down this far. It's a pretty long way, and—we're way over by the river here and—there's a lot of people in New York . . ."

Jill looked at her mother. "Oh", she said soberly.

"What's the matter", her father cried, "don't you like what you got here? There's a present for everyone! One, two, three! Look at them all! Merry Christmas!"

Jill nodded to her father, her eyes were very large. Her father suddenly picked up his coat and cap and left the apartment without saying a word. They all listened as he started the motor of his taxi parked out in front and drove away in a long sullen pull. Nobody spoke. Then Jane, their mother, said "You'd better go to bed now. We'll see you in the morning." Quietly they left for their room in the back, but their mother picked Jill up in her arms and carried her.

Jim got a fare on Park Avenue. The man gave him an address on Gramercy Square. His arms were loaded with gaily wrapped packages; stickers that said Merry Christmas. The man wished Jim a Merry Christmas as he left and give him a nickle tip. Jim parked his cab and slouched dully behind the wheel. In the middle of Gramercy Park a giant tree had been draped with lights of a golden color that gave the appearance of myriad candles. There were lighted electric candles in the windows of the apartments all around. Jim thought of his own apartment and shifted his position resentfully. People passed by frequently with bundles under their arms. There passed a group of carolers across the way. Jim switched on the radio of his car to drown them out. The program was one of Christmas music sung by a huge chorus. He turned the radio off.

An elderly man of mendicant look, a bum, tapped on the window of Jim's cab and motioned to the back seat. Jim hesitated a second and then nodded. The man got in. It was cold outside, but the heater helped to warm the car.

"Merry Christmas" the man said.

That's what they tell me" Jim replied.

"But it's a Merry Christmas" the man went on. "Christmases are always merry. They have to be. That's why they're Christmas."

And then the old man started to talk. He told Jim a lot of things: how it always made him laugh to see people worrying about Christmas bills; whether they had enough presents or not and whether they were expensive enough; how he laughed at the way people shoved each other about in the big stores like Macy's; how easy it was to smother the essential spirit of Christmas under a debris of wrapping paper; how clean and simple and reverent and jolly it was in his own village in Canada when he was a boy, how they all went to church and prayed and thought of God and his Son and then, after, laughed and whacked each other on the back and wished each other a Merry Christmas and sat around roaring fires and walked through the crisp, glass-cold night and listened to the silence of the woods and wondered at the stars. He told Jim a lot. Jim took him home with him.

"Here's your Santa Claus" he called out as he entered the apartment.

His wife looked at the old man with misgiving, but Jim went on—"You'd better get the children out of bed. He's going to tell them some stories; tell them about Christmas."

The old man laughed and said he hadn't played Santa Claus in a long while but that he'd do his best, and then he went on to admire the tree and the apartment and laughed over the children and they loved him on sight and laughed with him.

At last he got them quieted down and they sat around him on the floor and he told them the story of the birth of Jesus; but they'd never heard it that way before. He unfolded all the drama of the tale:—the shepherds on the hillside watching their flocks by night, with night closed in all around them and the stars overhead, shooting stars, and the lights of Bethlehem flickering in the distance below. And the wise men, the mystic wise men, who had studied the heavens, the swing of the stars and had suddenly felt tremors running thru them at what they saw, what they divined, that something wonderful, something unprecedented, something extraordinary was soon to happen; and how they conferred and decided to follow this star, this strange jewel, convinced that beneath it lay the most wonderful miracle of the ages; and how they packed and were laughed at by others and how they went on doggedly through sand and snow and wilderness and hostile country until they came to a stable, a mere stable behind an inn at Bethlehem. The noises of the inn; its crowds, its light, its warmth; their fatigue; and their questionings as to who was within, what fabulous guest—and then how they went at length to the rude stable, doubting, dubiously; this stable, a stable with straw and cattle and a young quiet couple—and a Babe lying in the manger . . .

And then he told them more: of their gifts to this child, this immortal child; the meaning, the symbolism pertaining to gifts at Christmas; the gifts of the wise men; but three gifts; three . . .

Jim looked at his wife and smiled shyly. She took his hand.

He murmured "Merry Christmas."

She kissed him, and smiled, and then said, "Merry Christmas."

"A CASE AGAINST OUR SOCIAL INERTIA"**By Rev. B. T. Medford****Pastor Oak Street Church, Petersburg, Va.**

"There is nothing permanent in life but change" said an ancient philosopher, many years ago. Although he was refuted many times by his contemporaries, and has been many times since, life has taught us to admit his statement as a fact and a reality. We live in the midst of change and because of change. A static society and world would soon experience moral and physical decay. It is the challenge and influence of the new and the untried, and the mental and spiritual gymnastics accompanying such, which gives life its zest and its flavor.

As reluctant as we are to admit it, we must know by our observations that man is the victim of inertia in more ways than the physical. We tend to come to rest morally, socially and spiritually and remain so; and we strenuously object to any force or power which makes inroads upon our peace and our complacency, no matter how beneficent a change may prove to be. This very fact is the source of our divisions, confusions and our perplexities today. Each age thinks of itself as an end, and that its duty is that of a protector of the sworn and admitted virtues of the best minds of yesteryear. The succeeding ages have recognized an "unwritten covenant" to see that these virtues are not outraged, and certainly not displaced or enlarged upon by any new moral or social concept of tomorrow, whether it presents an enlightened view on human behavior or not.

In this vein of thought, we can, at least partially understand and explain the attitude of the south in not granting the right of franchise and other civil rights to all citizens alike. In this way, we can catch a glimpse of the northerners' reason for his spirit of mere tolerance (within limits) of minorities, rather than the expression of a really active brotherhood. Social inertia has caused us to look with suspicion upon any nation whose customs may vary from ours, and whose ideologies may, in some proposed ideals, supersede ours. The difference here may only be that these varying ideologies emphasize and place an accent upon the failures in our own democracy; yet, such is sufficient to stir us into antagonisms, but not enough to cause us to seek corrective measures, the only real and effective way to combat a foe. We quickly lose patience with a person who dares see a good in or expresses a thought and proposes a procedure foreign to our inert social concepts, and we label that person as being "disloyal" or as being sponsored by a power or a nation other than ours. Indeed, our failure to admit the truth of the ancient philosopher in all the areas of our

society, is nursed and continually nurtured by our evident social inertia, which, through the years, has become a "fixation" which but emphasizes all the more, our cultural lags. The real threat to our peace and security, is not so much in things and ideologies external to us, but things and attitudes internal, born of, and the by-products of our social inertia.

Thus, it is evident that our attitude here has induced mental stagnation and a paralysis which holds us in a vice-like grip as we would go forward and move away from our former positions. However, the demand is upon us; the fact of necessity confronts us and will not be denied.

Our present social confusion is but the thrashing around of the spirit of man. The mind and soul is "chafing at the bits" in an attempt to break the bonds of inertia so as to find fuller expression. To remain static, is foreign to the soul of all mankind. It is nature's mandate for the normal mind to grow, to make changes and to move from stage to stage. This process could no more be stopped than could we stop the changing tides of the waters of the earth; for when we dam up a stream, we concentrate its contents (good or evil), and this concentrate becomes a force and a power, mighty in its potentiality. Likewise, when we give o'er to our inert concepts, and attempt to place limits and bonds around the minds and spirits of men, we form a concentrate of all their accomplishments, their aims and their visions and hinder their growth to perfection by the very false idea of their present perfection. This has largely been the case with our society today. Our refusal to move on from where we are; our social inertia has locked up our mistakes, our social ills, concentrated our evils and our suspicions and our hatreds of one another until man is today, no more than a seething cauldron with infinite potentiality for destruction and devastation. The resultant and evident confusion today is not so much an emphasis on the theory of the "necessity of evil" as it is a commentary on our need for growth, expansion and a release from ideological fetters which cramp and obviate the growth of total social goodness.

The mind of man today is ripe for change; in fact, it is on a search for new fields of manifestation and operation. The ground upon which it has stood has led to wars, divisions and suffering and produced a state of mind which is devastating. Old roads to peace and security have been blocked and now lead to dead ends. The area allowed by our present concepts has been explored, and the opportunity for progress and growth therein has been exhausted; and unless our present inertia in this regard is destroyed and our sphere of operation increased, so as to give room for the expression of the burning dream of social goodness within the soul of man, we shall consign ourselves to our present neuroticism

and futility. The fact of necessity for change and social growth is hard upon our heels, with an insistency that will not be denied. The restoration of the waste of our wars; the mere cessation of our internal hostilities is not near so important as it is to recognize the source of these evils and correct it. Therein lies our trouble. We suffer and endure these evils, not so much from an unavoidable antagonism against each other or other nations, but they are unconscious rebellions against social and mental bonds which hinder the mind of man from embarking upon wholesome and rewarding social ventures.

Our manifest success in the fields of pure science has had much to do with man's present revolt against our attitudes in the realm of the social. If experiments in the realm of the scientific have produced such astounding and hitherto unknown results, such as have blessed civilization, what are the possibilities of concerted and sincere experiments in the realm of human behavior? Our studies in the past in this regard, have not been didactic and pointed; we have merely sought to know and find reasons "Why We Behave Like Human Beings" . . . This is not enough. Today, man wants to find a counter-balance in the realm of the social to the progress that has been made in the realm of science. If we can find more diabolical means of destruction, surely the same mind and energy spent in an opposite direction, should produce means of saving society from itself, and a way to give moral ends to our strivings and our existence. There is an irrefutable spirit of inquiry emerging from the soul of man which will not be satisfied with yesterday's answers nor its accomplishments. This new and emergent inquiry will break the bonds of our present social inertia, and will "spill over" into new and untraversed areas, where it will find its own answers in the working out of a concept of social goodness which will far surpass our lethargy and feebleness in this regard today . . . Such is a case against our social inertia today; and to fail to heed it, is to remain in the "shallows and miseries of life" forever.

The first Varick Christian Endeavor Society was organized by the late Reverend W. A. Blackwell in Clinton Chapel Church, Lancaster, South Carolina in August 1896. The first society had probably less than twenty-five members.

From the History of the Varick Christian Endeavor
Society of the A.M.E. Zion Church by Colbert

NATIONALISM AND CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS IN AFRICA

By Rev. W. L. Yates

Professor, Church History and Missions, Hood Theological Seminary

The vast natural resources of Africa has been and is the one great magnetic force, that for centuries has drawn nations far and near to her shores, her trade conquest and exploitation.

In the words of Mr. Oliver Walker:

In the year 1652, when Oliver Cromwell was proclaiming his creed of "liberty of conscience" and the Maryland ancestors of George Washington were pushing cautiously across the Potomac in search of new lands, a band of some thirty white colonists, under Jon van Riebeck employees of the powerful Dutch East Indian Company, came ashore below the 4,000-foot shadow of Table Mountain to establish the Cape Colony at the southernmost tip of the horn of Africa.

Their first encounters with the aborigines were with cattle owning, yellow-skinned Hottentots and squat, Stone Age bow-and-arrow Bushmen.

The Hottentots they enslaved or deprived of their cattle. The Bushmen they hunted like game. Outpost of the tiny settlement of De Kaap, as it was then known, took on the habits of the aborigines. They were called "Boers" or farmers. They acquired herds of cattle. They became nomadic, land-hungry white Africans, mighty hunters and laws unto themselves.

The settlement grew with infusion of slaves from the East, from Mozambique, from Angola and with small intrusions from the religion-persecuted Huguenots of France.

A new race born of the mixed marriages was continued, and even encouraged, by the Dutch East Indian Company. They were the forefathers of the Cape Coloured, who to-day number 900,000.

The real dynamics of the white-black struggle in South Africa did not reveal themselves until after the occupation of the Cape by the British in 1795.

By that time the white frontiers-men had pushed their authority north-eastward and were in contact with the down-ward pressing Bantu tribes—"Kaffirs" or "Unbelievers" as they were called—the naked brown, spear-throwing men of Palo, Galeika, (Rarabe) and lesser chiefs of the great Xhosa-speaking nation.

British occupation early in the nineteenth century brought about the abolition of slavery. And it precluded that arrival of many missionaries of

different sects and lands, eager to carry the torch of Christianity through heathen Africa.

There came too, another infusion of white stock—a mere 5,000 settlers from Britian, who were dumped mostly on the east coast in the region of that "Kaffirland" which was already in the process of becoming a familiar battle-ground between Boers and Bantu.

British rule—the rule of law—and the humanities preached by the missionaries were repugnant to the Boers. The Africa they demanded was an eternity of grazing, a land of Canaan with ample supplies of Sons of Hoam who, if they could not be enslaved, could be reduced to serfdom by land-squeezing, the power of weapons and the lash.

The Boers trekked away from the Cape. Their tented wagons stole into the great game-gay uplands of the central High Veld. They creaked down the narrow passes of the spinal Drakensburg Mountains into the lush, semi-tropic emptiness of Natal.

But they could not escape the twin ghosts of Bantu and British. At Port Natal, later to become Durban, a little party of English hunters and traders had settled in the 1820's. And they were on friendly terms with Tshaka, the mightiest of African chiefs, whose Zulu hordes of fighting men were a matter of trembling and flight among tribes from the Limpopo River in the north of the Kei River in "Kaffirland."

The Boers fought the British in Natal. They fought the Zulus and beat them in revenge for the massacre of one of their leaders, Piet Retief, and sixty followers.

They trekked away again, many of them, up on to the High Veld, with a hymn on their lips and hate in their hearts, to found the Dutch of Afrikaans-speaking Republics of the Orange River and the Transvaal. Transvaal.

All this time the coastal belt was opening up to the world beyond the sea. Ports were growing. A handful of cities were taking on a semblance of maturity.

The white stock was being built up, but slowly—too slowly—for the Bantu that remained within the orbit of Christian influence were yielding to the new teachings of civilization.

Then came the new impulse—the discovery in 1868 of diamonds near the borders of the Transvaal Republic. From the four corners came the adventurers and the prospectors in feverish search for the little white stones.

The cry for African labour became strident. The African had no more land to give, no wealth to filch, but he had his labour

His old gods of land and cattle were already passing. The discovery of gold in the Transvaal late in the nineteenth century was the

death-knell of his pastoral past—the age-old life of a drifting subsistence through untrommelled Africa of which he could preserve only the shadow in the small Reserves and locations set apart for him by the all-prevading white man.

Twentieth-century South Africa began in bloodshed. The Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 saw the humbling of the Republics but not their creed of white baaksop (masterhead.) Hatred burned only deeper—hatred of the oncoming blacks, hatred of the British, and above all, hatred of the liberal spirit which threatened to unseat their ingrained white African Harrenvolksism.

But they masked their venom for the sake of political advantage, and in 1910 the Act of Union was signed, giving birth to self-government, Dominion of South Africa, a partner in the British Commonwealth, made up of the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal.

The historical issue of white versus black and European Liberalism versus Afrikaner domination were side-tracked and shelved.

But they were not dormant. Now these issues were translated into the economic as well as the political spheres, and South Africa between 1910 and the 1940's has become a forum in which the fundamental right of white settlement in Africa has been put into the witnessbox." 5

We find that for the last hundred years Africans have been guilty of the sin of complacency and unconsciousness. But this was the old African and not the new.

"The African spirit of indifference stands convicted by the results of its own works. Over the stagnate flats of the old mentality roll the stream waves of European imperialism, and from the ground to meet them, the voice of the "New Africa," like that of Abel, cries out to heaven . . .

The old philosophy of complacency is gone in Africa. There is a new interest in science, in technology, in public education, in commercial enterprise. The dawn of the new development in religion has arrived. The approach of the medieval church has no longer a grasp on the mind of the New African. He is aware that to be a good Christian implies an understanding of the whole physical life as it parallels the spiritual life. He apprehends now, more than ever before, that it is a healthy body that makes a healthy mind—a mind which is sane and moral.

A proof of the new mental alertness of the African people, now that they do understand, is revulsion of feeling.

A magic change has begun to take place. The tide of National discontent is rising in crescendo. There is a new shame and anger for past repression and miseducation; a new love and loyalty for things African;

a new faith in African irredentism; a new hope for the offspring of the renascent Africa. Old concepts in philosophy, religion, and politics are being rebaptized for their assimilation by unteachable humanity. There is a new social consciousness, a new sense of responsibility, a new creative quest, a new capacity for self-abnegation, a new sense of duty, and a new sense of unity." 6

Perhaps one of the greatest expressions of nationalism is found in the philosophy of Zikism, a youth movement of 1904 that grew out of a type of philosophy that is called Aggrey philosophy, a philosophy of pacificism vs an aggressive philosophy or a: "The new age is full of revenge." (For further discussion see Orizu, pages 287ff.)

One of the greatest assets to the nationalism as it is found in Africa is the new movement on the part of both the Government and the missionary organizations to teach and encourage Self-government on the part of the native. Whether these are movements out of a sincere Christian and Democratic spirit or politics of expediency and repentance by compensation I am not in a position to say, but it is a healthy sign in our modern era.

CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS

The Christian movements in Africa have furnished the soil from which the present movements of nationalism have taken root and has found nourishment as well.

Since the days of the early church Fathers, Africa has known and practiced a form of Christianity. But in the 19th century, she embraced Western Culture along with western Christianity. It had its greatest stimulus perhaps through the life and works of David Livingstone (1840-1873) "more than any other one man, Livingstone was the path-breaker for Christianity in Africa south of the Sahara." 7

It should be noted also that the Christian church has tended in many areas to divide the African Christian, this is especially true of South Africa. However the spirit of unity and the type of unity as presented to the Regional Conference of West Central Africa in July 1946, by Bishop Newell S. Booth, is the type of Christian unity among the missionary movements that will strengthen the spirit of nationalism now in progress in Africa.

There are two major Christian movements in Africa, commonly known as the Roman Catholic and Protestants. Both of these move-

6. A. A. Nwofor Orizu, *Without Bitterness*, Creative Age Press, Inc. 1944, p. 14f.

7. Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. v: The Great Century in the Americas, Australia and Africa, p. 349, New York, 1943, Harpers and Bros.

ments operate schools, hospitals, and stations, etc. Chief among the Protestant movements are: Y.M. and Y.W.C.A.'s, American Bible Society, Hospitals and Church Related, Grammar, High Schools and Colleges.

In a discussion of the role of Christianity in Africa, there are always three schools of thought, as Mr. Nnamdi Azikiwe correctly classified them. The first is the rightist, the second the leftist, the third the eclectic. The question is naturally raised: "Is it necessary for the well-being of the African to have European missionaries in Africa?"

The rightist represents a group of Africans who definitely, sincerely, and probably blindly, believe that without Christian missionaries the African continent cannot develop a sense of social and moral stability. To them Africa is still a "dark" continent, and Christianity is a symbol of illumination and civilization . . . They would declare that for whatever progress we have made today in Africa we are directly indebted to the efforts of missionaries . . . The good deeds of the missionaries in Africa overshadow what evil they have done.

The leftist represents another group of Africans who look at the missionaries with apprehension. They see missionaries with apprehension. They see missionaries as a weakening and degenerating influence on the vitality of the African stamina—physical, mental, and social. They say: "Africans, are a powerfully race, but their physical resistance can be broken down by an appeal to them to suffer punishment in this world with a view to eternal reward in the hereafter."

While they appreciate the missionary they feel that he is a tool of imperialism all over the continent . . .

The leftist further feels that Christianity as practiced by Europeans, has in it a germ of religious intolerance which was unknown and is undesirable in Africa. In his view, Christianity is good as a religious principle, but European missionaries in Africa are more of a social and cultural liability than an asset to the Africans.

The eclectic school represents a lukewarm group, that is, a group which refuses to show any active concern in what happens. It does not matter to them whether Christianity is rooted out of Africa, or whether it succeeds in ruling the minds of men there. In this group are some sincere men who believe in compromise . . ." 8.

In the light of these and other given views of Christian movements in Africa, especially those of the Protestant fellowships, that this new African is in the majority, and that majority is on the side of the leftist point-of-view.

The success of Christianity in Africa will be a fait accompli when the African is convinced in reality that the cohorts of Christianity and their religion, are not the tools of imperialism.

COMMON SOCIOLOGIC FACTORS IN RELIGIONS

by Prof. Herbert H. Stroup

Brooklyn College, New York

Religions appear to possess many common, formal characteristics. Although they may differ in particulars, nevertheless, there is an important sense in which they all have certain common features.

Religions may differ among themselves as to the proper mode of salvation, but all religions are concerned with salvation in that they have intellectual frameworks (theologies) which, in part, orient their believers into definite value schemes. Religions may disagree as to the exact necessity and form of certain ceremonies but all religions have ceremonies which the individual follower must practice on threat of his soul. Religions may claim or not claim any definite group of social elites as being inherent to their organization and function as religions, but all religions tend to develop some sort of specially privileged group within the larger society. Religions may or may not claim to possess the only infallible 'Word' from on high, but all religions, if they exist for any appreciable time, tend to gather traditions about themselves which usually they believe form a part of their divine status. In this sense, then, religions may be analyzed according to many broad, inclusive, common features.

The common features of religions may be listed as follows:

1. History and Leaders

Most religious groups have a history, a founder and leaders. If the world's living religions are surveyed, for instance, it is obvious that all of the eleven have had a history. Not all of these religions, however, are INTERESTED in history; indeed, a vital interest in history may be said to be peculiar to only a few. Hinduism, despite its antiquity, is essentially unconcerned with history. Judaism, on the other hand, is quite history-conscious.

1 Robert E. Hume, **The World's Living Religions** (N. Y. various editions)

A common rule is that religions have founders. It is difficult to conceive of any religion starting without some one person who feels himself especially inspired and led to begin a religion. Yet there are several striking exceptions to this observation: these can be enumerated briefly. The founder of Hinduism, if there was one, has been lost to our knowledge, and this is true also of Shintoism. Further, scholars still debate whether Jesus really desired to break away entirely from the Judaist tradition. Finally, Moses is generally accredited with the founding

of Judaism, but this view is not entirely conclusive, for many other earlier than Moses contributed to the formation of the Hebrew's sense of being a special group (in their own opinion if not in Jahveh's).

Generally, however, religions do possess a founder and usually the veneration for the founder, by his followers, is intense. Commonly the founder is one of the chief focal points of group loyalty. The founder's words and deeds are looked upon by the followers as being bindingly definitive.

The founder of religion will probably also be its leader. But, after the founder dies, the existence of the religious community is usually seriously threatened. If the threatened religion succeeds in maintaining itself from that point, credit is usually due some one who has arisen at the time and taken over the leadership of the religion and developed it from the place where its founder left it. The vitality and form of any religious group depends greatly upon the nature of its leadership.

2. Scriptures

Most religious groups have a set of writings which they consider to be sacred. The quantity of the sacred writings may be great or small. The sacred words may be handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth as was the lengthy Rig Veda in ancient India. But, always there is a sacred tradition, written if possible or where advantageous. These sacred scriptures generally contain the essential theological teachings of the religion and may in addition (usually incidentally) give such items of interest as a description of the person who wrote down the tradition for the first time or the social conditions characterizing the specific age in which the scriptures were written, etc. In the case of Shintoism its sacred tradition has been embedded largely in Japanese social history and very little of importance of it exists in written form even to this day. Hinduism, on the other hand, possesses thousands of pages of sacred tradition of a most varied character,—songs, epics, laws, etc. Christianity peculiarly has taken over the sacred tradition of another religion, namely Judaism, and has incorporated this into its own sacred manual. Islam has gone a step further in this procedure, although in a different manner, appropriating the sacred writings of two religions, Judaism and Christianity, although adding its own the Koran.

3. The Specially Elect

Every religious group has some theory of a specially elect group within the whole of society. The theory may be so put into practice that the whole society is ruled by this specially elect group. Thus, the conception which some religious groups have of their place in society

is somewhat akin to the various "racisms" which have been so aggressively promulgated in our own time. Whatever the religious group's theory of its relationship to the whole of society, it must possess some outward form of organization.

Often the religious group may claim to have no specially elect group on the grounds that it has no "priesthood". This view usually means that of the larger religious community, of the "body of believers", each one is his own "priest". Each one who accepts such a religion also accepts what is conceived by its adherents as a superior social placement in relation to the whole of society.

4. Ceremonies

Every religious group seeks to foster holy ways of doing things. When a practice is performed constantly in direct connection with religious sanctions it often becomes a religious ceremony. The act tends to be repeated in exactly the same way in every detail.

Moreover, the ceremonial observances of one religion may often appear amusing or irreligious to the follower of another. Sikh priests at the shrine of the Golden Pool of Immortality at Amritsar in India believe that it is binding upon them to put their holy book, the *Adi Granth*, to bed every night as one would a human person. Christians believe that it is not necessary for them to do this with their sacred scriptures. The true Jain believes that he must not kill any living creature no matter how tiny. Christians commonly eat meat without feeling any compunction. Christians, on the other hand, have their own peculiar ceremonial observances. Because the Quakers (to use only one example in the development of Christianity) believe that stained-glass windows in churches are not conducive to Christianly worship, does not presume that their religion (and from other features too) lacks ceremony. Quakers merely think that some other ceremonies are more important, such as the modes of dress or the manner of addressing persons. All religious groups have modes of thought and action which they practice unto themselves and may be termed ceremonies.

5. Theology

Every religious group has convictions as to the ultimate nature of reality. Each religion considers its interpretation of experience one of its principal distinguishing characteristics, and such it is. The religious philosophies of the world's living religions vary (especially in regard to such a central doctrine as that of deity) from the extremes of original Buddhism, on the one hand, to Islam, on the other hand. The fact of their differences, however, does not deter them usually from actively propagating their peculiar conceptions of the ultimate nature of things.

One religion, Zoreastrianism, does not permit converts from outside its own religious-social community, but its theology is admired by many and adopted knowingly and unknowingly by many.

The various living religions are hostile to such other areas of approach—to truth as philosophy and science in proportion to their need for revelation. Revelation is a means which theologians use not only to designate that their doctrine is difficult to comprehend, but also they would like it to carry the prestige of the very name of deity. Revelation is most needed by those religious theorists who are furthest from primitiveness and naturalism. Revelation provides a powerful doctrinal control to any religion which cares to use it.

6. Relation to Other Segments of Society

Every religious group bears a relation to other segments of society and to society as a whole. A religious group which is seeking to have its doctrine widely accepted may conclude, for example, that it would be most advantageous for it to start its own week-day educational program for its youth. The group may feel that certain methods or subject-matter foreign to public school procedure will further its ends more than the conventional ways. The religious community, if it is small, may be unable to provide for its own educational needs and therefore it may accept grudgingly and critically the aid of an other group or of the public or it may refuse all aid.

Moreover, a religious group which attains any sizeable proportions will come into contact with government. Religious groups must incorporate themselves under state laws, etc., in many parts of the world. A group may find some governmental requirements religiously impossible; thus, the group creates an opinion of the requirements and those who require, which is usually determinative of its policy.

Then too, within all societies there are existent religious groups which become antagonistic when confronted with "upstart" religions. A young religion may come into violent combat with an older and more powerfully consolidated religion. Young, as well as older religions, quickly form attitudes toward each other. Also there may be actual warfare against each other.

7. Means of Gaining and Maintaining Permanency

Although religions are usually concerned with "spiritual" things, nevertheless, they cannot exist and grow without "material" aids. A religion which is unable to gain the material means of supporting itself will in time be unable to exist at all. Every living religion has means of maintaining its permanency. Most often these means appear to be observable in terms of money, possession of properties, contracts, etc.,

but there are also several "spiritual" means which religions use.

Sometimes the chief means of keeping adherents within the group is the threat of damnation or the loss of salvation. Religions flourish among those persons who feel themselves insecure. Some people are attracted to a religion if it promises them a pleasurable after-life. There are others who seek in religion a means of escaping from future punishments for misdemeanors committed in this mundane existence. Those who follow these procedures today, it would seem, are only those who are capable of processes of extreme rationalization. To such people religion is a haven. Religions accept these people as one part of their total membership.

Often the means of keeping adherents within the group is the presentation or confrontation of high-minded persons with extreme ethical demands. Some persons seek a religion which will call out the ethically "highest" pattern of behaviour. They want a religion which will demand their most rigorous adherence to and practice of standards of an ethical nature which are as yet socially uncommon.

These, then, are categories which may be used to describe and analyze religions. This classification of the common, formal characteristics of religions, however, does not mean to imply that religions can be described in a completely satisfactory manner by so reducing them to the foregoing minimal categories. Each religion demands painstaking examination in its own context if it is to be fully and correctly understood. Even this method, perhaps, will never fathom in entirety the mystery and the splendor of the religious spirit.

Everywhere is a hunger for education. We had to turn a deaf ear to many an incessant call in view of the requirements of the Education Ordinance. We find no mission in West Africa can thrive without schools for the training of boys and girls. The spread of Christianity and Education must go hand in hand in the Mission field. The Ordinance insists upon suitable building and efficient staff. I can assure you that the good teacher and good schools will be helped and encouraged by the government. We shall leave no stone unturned in the coming year until we have an adequate staff of teachers to put our schools on a proper basis. At the present these are the schools we have in the district—Oyoku, Urua Eye, Ndon, Eoom, Efoi, Idung Offiong and Uyana.

From the Episcopal Address of the late Bishop J. W. Brown
delivered before the Niagara Conference

The Reverend LeRoy Hess, minister of the Upper Ridgewood Community Church, Ridgewood, New Jersey, is a member of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America and is also a member of the Executive Committee of that Board. For several years he has been active in the New Jersey Council of Churches, being a member of the Department of School Education and Action. He is likewise a member of the Planning Committee of the Interdenominational Conference on the Church World Mission which meets at Silver Bay, New York each summer.

Reverend Hess is one of the most active ministers in the local Council of Churches, having served as President of that group, and then as head of the Adult Education Committee in charge of the lecture and study series of the Council. At the present time Mr. Hess heads the important Youth Education Committee of the Council which is doing an outstanding job of youth leadership in the community.

The Editor of the REVIEW feels that the WORLD OUTLOOK and CONCEPT which Mr. Hess brings to his message can be deeply refreshing to our readers. In addition, the long ministry which Mr. Hess has had in his present church has enriched his mind to the point that we list him as one of the most courageous ministers we know. Now that he has joined our family we feel that we can look forward to the result of his pen.

A SERMON OUTLINE

"Let the Heart Sing" — Text, Psalm 67:4

- I. The hymn "Fairest Lord Jesus" has been called the "Crusaders Hymn". According to tradition it was sung by the German Knights of the 12th century on their way to Jerusalem. A song gives life, zest and meaning to crusaders. A song also maketh the heart glad. The Psalmist felt that gladness and singing went hand in hand for he said:

"Let the peoples be glad and sing for joy,
For Thou, O Lord, dost judge the nations justly,
And dost lead the peoples in the earth." (Psalm 67:4).

- II. It is important to possess a singing heart.

A — We do better work when there's music in the heart. Said Thomas Carlyle, "Give me the man who whistles at his task." The "Volga Boatman" was sung by peasants as they pulled boats along the Volga River. We are told that during the war officers had the band play, when possible, while a ship was being unloaded, for they found that the ship was unloaded faster when there was music ringing in the men's ears. From observation we know the happy man does better work than the man who is melancholy or disgruntled.

B — Song is also important in creating and maintaining enthusiasm for an institution or a cause. Colleges have their Alma Maters, every nation has its national anthem, fraternal organizations have their songs. Song has and does play a vital role in religion.

As an example of the role of song in worship take the old hymn, Psalm 24:1-6, which was sung antiphonally at worship: The people gathered at the entrance of the Temple for worship and at the appointed time a priestly choir from within the Temple sang,

"To the Lord belongs the earth and its fulness,
The world and those who dwell therein.
For He founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods."

Then the worshippers outside the Temple entrance would answer, intoning the words,

"Who can ascend into the hill of the Lord?
And who can stand in His holy place?"

The Priestly Choir from within the Temple would answer, singing,

"He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has no desire for falsehood,
Who never breaks his word."

The worshippers, accepting the priest's challenge would then enter the Temple, and as they entered the priestly choir pronounced a blessing upon them, singing,

"He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God who helps him;
Such is the lot of those who seek the Lord,
Who seek the face of the God of Jacob."

C. — Another great value of a singing heart is that in songs we find a unifying force. Those who are against practically everything Russian joyfully listen to Russian music. During the war we thought nothing of listening to German music. In religion song unites us, for people of many faiths sing such hymns as: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" written by Phillips Brooks, an Episcopalian; "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" written by John Bowring, a Unitarian; "Faith of Our Fathers" written by Frederick Faber, a Roman Catholic; "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" written by Charles Wesley, a Methodist; "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind" written by John Greenleaf Whittier, a Quaker; "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" written by Henry Van Dyke, a Presbyterian.

D — A singing heart is of great importance for noble living. Rollo May, the psychologist, says that joy is man's greatest developer of personality. Joy is an instrument of unselfishness. The child, overjoyed by what he saw at the circus, must share his delight. The adult, seeing a glorious beauty spot, has the urge to describe it to others. Also, joy puts vitality into life. If we do not feel joy deeply we become passive, then negative, then cynical. Take joy out of life and we become "sour", then despondent, then we

find it hard to get on with ourselves as well as with others.

III. Seeing that joy is of such great importance let us follow the advice of the Psalmist, "be glad and sing for joy."

A. — Let us be glad. Let us write down the things for which we can be glad; we'll be surprised at the long list. There is good all about us if we but have the eyes to see it; even "every dark cloud has its silver lining". Let us remember the maxim, "No man can enjoy happiness without thinking that he enjoys it," and the words of James Oppenheim,

"The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance;
The wise man grows it under his feet."

B — Let us sing. The glad heart is sure to burst forth into song. But what if we have no voice for singing? We can sing with a smile. Charles Dickens in his "A Christmas Carol" speaks of a person who brought joy to a party, saying, "In came Mrs. Fessiwig with one vast, substantial smile". A British minister, telling of his visits to an invalid parishioner who always greeted him with a cheery smile said, "her room always seemed filled with music." We can sing with a helping hand. A "Care" package sent to a European family brought this reply, "Your package gave strength to our bodies and music unto our hearts." We can sing with the spoken word. There is music in a simple and honest "Thank you." Words of praise to one who has done well is music unto his ears. It's music to the ears of God when we devoutly speak of His wondrous handiwork and of His mercy, unto our neighbors.

IV. The psalmist knew it was not enough to tell people to "be glad and sing for joy". There must be a reason and basis for gladness and a singing heart. So he said,

"For Thou, O Lord, dost judge the nations justly,
And dost lead the peoples in the earth."

With such a faith in God we are sure to "be glad and sing for joy."

So let us do as another psalmist, who said,

"I keep the Lord always before me,
Therefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices." (16:8,9)

A SERMON OUTLINE

"Religion and World Order"

Scripture, Isaiah 65:17-25 — Text, Isaiah 65:17

I. The prophet Isaiah introduces his description of the Messianic Age

with the words, "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah (65:13), Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." (65:17) Some of the conditions of this new world are: Sad and disappointing days will be forgotten; the sun of happiness will shine over the whole earth. Those who labor shall enjoy the fruits of their labor. The people shall have long life; "They shall not rear their children to die suddenly" says the prophet, thus, wars shall not be. (Isaiah 65:17-23)

A — To have such conditions on the earth, we must have a well ordered world; this means, harmony in social, economic and political relations within the nations, and peaceful and cooperative action among the nations.

II. Religion has an important role to play in creating such a world. In "A Message for World Order Day" by the Federal Council of Churches was this sentence, "Building the foundations of world order is essentially a religious task." When we consider what these foundations are we see how true this statement is.

III. The foundations of World Order which religion (The Church) must build.

A — A common understanding of the spiritual nature of man. As long as we differ on the nature of man we will have discord. Consider the opposing views which are held and see where they lead:

1 — Is man made to rule his own destiny, under God? If so, we look to democracy and we judge the worth of all things and actions on the basis of its effects on individuals. Or is man made to be ruled? If so, we look to totalitarianism, with the state as the ruler and as the god to be worshipped.

2 — Is man so made that he can and does respond to altruistic motives? If so, we have grounds for working for a cooperative world order; such an order demands thought and action on behalf of others. Or is man fundamentally greedy? If so, we must work for a world in which men are "fenced in", like a farmer fences in his animals to keep them under proper restrictions.

3 — Is man primarily a spiritual being, a child of God? If so, we have grounds for working for a "world family", where men live as brothers ought to live. Or is man primarily a physical being? If so, our chief concern will be to satisfy his physical needs, and we will not have much concern for such things as rights, liberties and self-determination.

B — Another foundation of world order is a general acceptance of high moral standards.

1 — A common agreement as to what is right and wrong is essential

for making of law; and we cannot have world order without world law.

- 2 — The moral standards accepted must fit in with life. Hitler held it to be a high virtue to hate the Jew, think the German superior and to ruthlessly suppress any who differed with the state; such moral concepts worked for discord, not harmony.
- 3 — Christianity offers moral standards that fit life; we cannot be true Christians if we do not preach and teach the moral laws proclaimed by Jesus.

C — Good will is another foundation of world order.

- 1 — This is not a negative virtue. We cannot say we have good will because we do not directly harm someone. In Parable of Good Samaritan, the Priest and Levite who passed by on the other side did not have good will.
- 2 — Cannot have world order unless there is a willingness to bind up another's wounds, of people and of nations, and help them on the way to good health.
- 3 — Surely, it is a religious task to get people and nations to work for another's good.

D — A conciliatory spirit is also a foundation of world order.

- 1 — Men of good will, with a common acceptance of moral standards and a common understanding of the nature of man will differ. For, to build a well ordered world we must deal with concrete situations and make judgments as to who are the best qualified persons for all kinds of positions. The question of method is involved, just how a thing should be accomplished, and on the question of method noble men differ.
- 2 — So, there must be a willingness to give and take, to compromise.
- 3 — This too is a religious task, for noble religion teaches respect for the honest views of others and respect for the individual.

IV. God is at work in our world creating new heavens and a new earth. He is depending upon us to cooperate with Him in this creation of a happy and glorious world.

A — The hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" is about "soldiers of the cross" who are militant in their work for peace and good will among men. Yes, they march behind a cross—"with the cross of Jesus going on before", says the hymn,—they make sacrifices and use love as their power and guide.

B — God asks us to work with Him, in a fervent spirit of consecration, in His work of creating "new heavens and a new earth", in establishing His ways among men, in building a well ordered world.

THE REVIEW LABORATORY

Effective work in a local congregation can only be done by long range thinking, planning and diligent activity. For many years the Mount Lebanon Church, Elizabeth City, North Carolina, the leading church of the denomination in Eastern North Carolina, had the reputation of keeping its ministers about two years. With the coming of the Reverend M. S. Rudd this pattern was changed, bringing with it a truly great decade of church activity.

The Mount Lebanon Church today boasts of more than 500 members added in the eight years Reverend Rudd has been its minister. In addition a Hammond organ was purchased several years ago contributing much to the worship services of the congregation.

The summer program for children and young people has been a progressive one, with care being exercised in the organization of groups and play periods. To aid in this phase of the work a log cabin was built on the church grounds. Around this building these activities take place. For several years a Daily Vacation Bible School has been conducted with gratifying success.

The church plant itself has been improved upon, putting to greater use the facilities already available and laying the groundwork for the future. Many of the readers of the Review will know that the Mount Lebanon Church, is, in fact, a magnificent dream of its ministry and membership which has never been realized. Some have believed that the dream was too great but the rapid trend of church activity definitely proves that the planners of this great organization merely were prophets who saw God's work at its full.

The Church under the leadership of Reverend Rudd had pioneered in the organization and the fostering of aid to the aged people of the congregation. This project, when it was inaugurated, created wide attention throughout the area.

THE WORLD TODAY

Recently in Boston, Church World Service received 45,000 bars of soap as the result of its participation in the CARE Soap Campaign. The campaign specifies that for every two SWAN soap wrappers sent by church members and organizations to Church World Service, CARE Soap Campaign, Boston 3, Mass., CARE would turn over to Church World Service a bar of soap for use in its relief and reconstruction work overseas. Lever Brothers Company has donated this soap to CARE for this purpose.

In a letter to members of Church World Service, official Protestant relief agency for overseas work, Dr. Stanley I. Stuber designated the soap drive as an official part of that organization's Contributed Supplies Program. Said Dr. Stuber, "With winter coming on, and with the refugee problem increasing we have a serious responsibility to help meet this growing crisis. This is no time for Christians to cease their efforts to send material aid abroad."

With the extension of the campaign from its original deadline—August 1st—to December 31st, renewed activity on its behalf is underway among member groups of Church World Service.

Among the most active groups in the past have been the Baptist and the Presbyterians. In both groups women have played a large part in the success of the campaign.

For the Baptist organizations, women have conducted telephone campaigns to apprise friends of the value of the drive; they have brought their wrappers to meetings and devoted a large part of those meetings to reports on the progress of their efforts. In addition, Baptist publicity about the campaign has been extensive, achieving much success in obtaining coverage not only in the religious press but also in the general press.

Women of the Presbyterian groups used their Synod meetings as a means of distributing campaign material. J. M. Harding, editor of Presbyterian Life, issued an action letter to members of the Northern Presbyterian Council and to women leaders of member churches, urging full support of the soap drive, and he accompanied it with 1600 reprints of the advertisement which Lever Brothers—donor of the soap to be sent abroad—inserted in Presbyterian Life. In addition, Harding supervised a complete mailing of materials to all Presbyterian Bishops.

The Methodists have been able to give full editorial support to the drive through their publications, and Methodist women are actively en-

couraging community-wide return of Swan soap wrappers.

Making extensive use of publicity on the local level—through their publications, their bulletins and the local press—Y.M.C.A.'s throughout the country have fostered the drive in their own localities. The project has been nationally endorsed by this group.

Most recently, the younger, inter-denominational groups—namely, the United Christian Youth Movement—have moved to the fore in aiding the drive. At its national convention at Ottenbein College in Westerville, Ohio, in September, the delegates adopted a resolution endorsing and adopting it as an official and active campaign.

On his return from a prolonged news-gathering tour of Europe, Alex Dreier famed commentator for the National Broadcasting Company, said, "On my recent trip through Germany I saw on every hand the need for soap and other aids to sanitation, to help a needy people in their struggle to return to normal living."

THE GENERAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CONVENTION

Plans for The General Christian Education Convention of the African M. E. Zion Church, scheduled to meet in Richmond, Va., August 1-6, 1950 are rapidly rounding into shape according to recent information from the Christian Education Department office. The theme for the conference will be **Building Tomorrow's World Today**. Individuals attending the sessions will have the high opportunity of attending Bible lectures, leadership education and ministers' institute courses, audi-visual education session, and many other features. The Convention itself will cater to the needs of every individual in the church, children's workers, adults and youth. Peculiar problems of every church situation will be dealt with.

Many of the outstanding leaders of the church will be present and active in these sessions, including Bishops, General officers, ministers and laypeople. Other than our church official family some of the leaders will include: Mrs. Josephine H. Kyles, Associate Secretary of the Washington, D. C. Federation of Churches, Dr. J. V. Catledge, Director of Adult Work in the A.M.E. Zion Church, Miss Edith M. Kemp, in charge of Children's Work, Prof. Wilson Q. Welch, in charge of Town and Country Work, and Reverend J. Clinton Hoggard, director of Youth Work.

Missions, too, will come in for its share of emphasis with leadership capable to care for all phases of the work.

PLAN

ON

RICHMOND

THE BOARD OF BISHOPS' MEETING

For no doubt the first time in the history of the church the Board of Bishops' Meeting is scheduled to meet in Kansas City with Bishop W. C. Brown as the host. When the Connectional Council met in Newburg, New York the thought was voiced that one of our semi-annual meetings would be held in the Missouri Conference and in this city. We look with great expectations to the Kansas City visit.

The International Council of Religious Education will meet February 12-18 in Columbus, Ohio. The meetings are scheduled to open at 2:30 p. m. Sunday, February 12 with Francis B. Sayre, the United States Representative to the United Nations as the principal speaker. This will give those who attend from the A.M.E. Zion Church the opportunity to attend Founder's Day at Livingstone College and then proceed to Columbus, Ohio.

The Annual Meeting of the Federal Council of Churches Race Relation group will be held December 16, 1949 in the National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park, New York City. These sessions are scheduled to open at 10:00 a. m. with a worship service led by the Reverend James H. Robinson, minister of the Church of the Master, New York City.

The Faculty and Students of the Hood Theological Seminary, Salisbury, North Carolina, are rejoicing in the presentation of two fine gifts to the Seminary during November. From the estate of the late Emily Lawall Gabel the sum of \$3,293.80 has been given while from the library of the late Dr. Eugene William Lyman of Union Theological Seminary approximately 700 volumes have been given. These cover the fields of Ethics, Theology, Philosophy and Psychology of Religion.

In the A.M.E. Zion Church Yearbook of 1895 (Directory) the following educational enterprises were listed: Livingstone College, Petty High School, Lancaster S. C., Jones University, Tuscaloosa, Ala., Greenville High School, Greenville, Tenn., Atkinson College, Madisonville, Ky., Greenville High School, Greenville, Ala., Zion High School, Norfolk, Va., Sherwood Orphan School, Petersburg, Va.

In the report of the late Bishop J. W. Hood (1892) is noted the following: Number of sermons preached, 99; Numbers of addresses delivered to churches and Sabbath Schools, 56; Number of episcopal visits made, 124; churches dedicated, three; Christmas sermon delivered at the Fayetteville Church (the fifteenth time). In addition the Bishop had traveled 15,670 miles in supervising his work.

BEHIND THE COTTON CURTAIN

The former editor of the A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review, Bishop James Clair Taylor has suggested the title listed above as a feature of the REVIEW. In so many instances we have been kept face to face with the IRON CURTAIN to the extent that we need to be made aware of the COTTON CURTAIN here at home. We will attempt to list in these pages the happenings which we think are not only significant but demand our attention right here at home.

U.S. TO SEEK INDICTMENTS IN FLORIDA

From the New York Post, December 12, 1949

"Washington, D. C., Dec. 12—The Justice Department is ready to seek Federal indictments against Florida law enforcement officials who brutally beat three Negro "rape" suspects, the New York Post learned today. . . . the Florida officials will be charged with depriving the three youths of their constitutional right to a fair trial."

By the excerpts taken from the New York paper as listed above many of us will recognize the age old pattern of the South. It appears that the case of **rape** was never proved and that **confessions** were actually beaten out of the men arrested. According to the **Post** the Justice Department is laying the facts gleaned by a representative of the paper and the Federal Bureau of Investigation before a Grand Jury.

A few weeks ago Howard University gave a dinner for the group of student actors who had just returned from Europe. Guest of the occasion was one whom the Negro race fought hard to keep off the Supreme Court bench, Justice Hugo Black. The stirring words still ring in our ears as he answered the charges at the time concerning his association with clandestine groups. Admired for his honesty and admissions even his staunchest critics decided to "wait and see". Today the race feels secure with Justice Black. In his remarks he stated: "Its a long way from Clay County, Alabama to the campus of Howard University . . . and I'm glad to be here."

Hidden away somewhere in the pages of the American press was the account of an attack on a respected citizen in the South, an attack that ended in death. Guarded by a frightened lad for several hours who finally overcome his fear enough to secure aid he was found by sympathetic neighbors. After an intensive search his attackers were captured and jailed. For a time feeling ran high to the point that law enforcement agents feared for the lives of the accused. The part which makes this an impressive story in this land of too much violence is that the murdered man was a Negro and the attackers were WHITE.

From a Pennsylvania daily comes the stirring words of a Judge to a condemned prisoner stating that he had better be glad that his crime was committed in Pennsylvania and not in the South where, the inference was, law might have been taken into illegal hands. The Editor feels that no matter how terrible the crime those elected and charged with, the carrying out of our laws could do much better than use as an example the lawless forces of men, no matter where they might live. To our way of thinking, it is just such emphasis we would do well to de-emphasize.

And then there's the story of the mayor of a little Southern town who was so vehemently criticised for putting in sewers and paved roads in the Negro district that he went gunning.

EDITORIALS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

One of the two great holy days of all Christendom is at hand with all the great joy which these only can bring—the one rejoicing for all mankind in the birth of God's only begotten Son and the other redemption for whosoever will.

God's desire for peace and good will toward men seems furtherest from most minds today. Yet we must know whatever our present or future status we alone stand responsible. It seems to us that our world has brought God to His helpless extremity.—helpless in that man, according to His plan, must remain a free moral agent. Perhaps our total troubles stem from the insincerity of our greeting—Merry Christmas; and yet more than ever those words bring to our hearts the one genuine desire so needed today.

A few years ago the United Nations was born in moments of silence—a silence that was supposed to allow God in or out of the individuals thoughts as he desired. This Christmas the United Nations finds itself faced with a great religious, as well as spiritual problem—the control of Jerusalem. There is little doubt men are busily engaged in finding the easiest and friendliest way out of the situation but one wonders if this too is not a case where "if you're big enough we'll walk around you, but if you're small enough we'll walk over you." There can be no Merry

Christmas as long as power politics and endless compromise governs actions. Somehow, somewhere those who are strong must become aware of the God Mission of being and in our wearisome lip service to human rights become aware that Christ came to an inter-racial world long years before nordic supremacy was born.

We exclaim "Merry Christmas" to our friends here in 1949, but could we not go further and work to bring about a better one in 1950? It's almost two thousand years now since the angels sang "Peace on Earth", a hope, a prayer. One hundred and seventy-five years ago—our leaders penned the same hope—based on the recognition of human rights. In 1950 Josh White Jr., will play in "How Long 'Til Summer"—a symbolic confession that the liberties and rights and privileges we admit are for all people has yet to come in our life. True enough "How Long 'Til Summer" is not the first of its kind. Native Son and Strange Fruit, repulsive and revolting to so many, brushed us against the grain. These earlier acknowledgements of human injustice are being followed by such screen plays as Pinky, Home of the Brave and Lost Boundaries, merely additional indications of our imperfections.

"Merry Christmas" is the theme of practically every business concern from one end of America to the other. One wonders how much emphasis would exist on this the Lord's birthday if His coming did not push sales to record highs—did not empty store shelves and warehouse floors so that the new line of stock could replace the sold goods. When Christmas comes a goodly portion of America will be glad its over. Many will seize upon the day as one of merry making with Christmas left out. A few of us will attend religious services on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. That will be the Son's meager share of His natal day.

"Merry Christmas" as we know it is so like feasting without the honored guest—giving presents to all except to him whose birthday it is—remembering our friends and relatives with good will, but neglecting to bring good wishes to the giver of all good will.

We suppose there would be little to commend us this day if it were not for the fact that some stony hearts are softened a little and most of us will smile this day even at our enemies.

IN AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

When Christmas comes the minister is always looking for new and interesting materials which can be presented in the sanctuary not only for instruction but for the Christmas emphasis on this the Master's natal day. Those of you who have at hand the fourth issue of 1948 will recall that we recommend the following:

WHEN THE LITTLEST CAMEL KNELT

(a film strip which is now produced with records)

THE SHEPHERDS WATCH

(a film strip which can be used as an Advent service)

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL (Dickens)

(A film strip which tells in graphic form this old Christmas story)

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS (Sound Film)

(A story of the old poem, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas)

Recently two additional Christmas visual aids have been made available. We give a quick resume here.

RUDOLPH, THE RED NOSE REINDEER

We had the privilege of seeing a preview of the film on Rudolph and everyone who saw the film went away with the great desire to discover how it could be shown to church groups. The story based on the song by the same name will delight every child to whom it is shown this Christmas and for many years to come. Filmed by the Jam Handy Co., in Detroit and sponsored by one of the National Mail Order houses you will make no mistake in seeing Rudolph or showing it in your church come another Christmas.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

by Florence Turvery Reeves

Mrs. Reeves who has written several articles for the Review and who is also a contributor to the International Council of Religious Education Journal has issued this and a companionate set call **The Madonna**. These pictures are 2 x 2 color slides, mounted and ready for use based on the masterpieces found in the National Gallery, Washington, D. C. The sets include:

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

(Six Slides)

GIORGIONE — Adoration of the Shepherds

(Two Slides)

DAVID — Rest on the Flight

BOTTICELLI — Adoration of the Magi

(Two Slides)

SASETTA — Journey of the Magi

THE MADONNA

(Six Slides)

MASOLINO — Annunciation

PIERO DI COSIMO — Visitation

RAPHAEL — Small Sowper Madonna

RAPHAEL — Niccolini Cowper Madonna

TIEPOLO — Madonna of the Goldfinch

TINTORETTO — Madonna of the Stars

These sets are accompanied with complete interpretations by Mrs. Reeves.

LOOKING AHEAD IN BOOKS

DEFEAT TRIUMPHANT

By Lewis MacLachlan

Hinsdale, Illinois: Henry Regnery Company, 1949. 84 pages. \$2.00

Defeat Triumphant is one of the greatest expressions of the true Christian Faith; and, moreover, it is truly a composite of the better type of theology and philosophy. This is, perhaps, an understatement in that the basic principles, as discussed by the author transcend the limitations of naive systems in their attempt to categorize the Gospel. "The Gospel demands for its full and proper presentation the same medium in which it was first given the world—human personality. It is necessary to state this plainly so that two mistakes may be avoided: (1) The Gospel does not consist of a body of doctrines. It is not the same thing as the teaching of Jesus, though it is not the Gospel if it is not in complete accordance with that teaching. Nor is it the Church's teaching about Jesus. It is a message which, while we must attempt to put it into words, and can no more refrain from putting into words than into action, can never find adequate and satisfactory expression in any words, however rapacious or however correct. (2) At the same time, the Gospel is not only the historical record of what Jesus did and suffered. It is an announcement of a state of affairs conditioned and revealed by our Lord's life and death. If it is an interpretation of life in the light of these events, it is the disclosure of facts about life which have been made evident in the fact of Christ."

The "gospel" is pointed out as a significant word, in that it announces the reign of God, "It is quite obvious, of course, that the present condition of the world does not represent His will or rule. We live in

a world in which evil is rampant, a fact recognized in the Johannine phrase, 'the Prince of this world,' for it is a world in which cupidity and fear have usurped a large measure of control. This is because the rule of God is of the gentle nature, persuasive nature of love, and does not take full effect in the lives of men except by their consent. It is possible to shut God out, and that is what humanity has done. But the Gospel declares and demonstrates the fact that God is nevertheless reigning, that there is a divine omnipotent power of absolute good awaiting the acceptance of mankind. There is a sphere in which the will of God is perfectly accomplished. The name given to it in Scripture is "Heaven". This Heaven is not far off, the remote abode of departed spirits, but is the real world of spiritual values in which man has his home." "The Christian Gospel is demonstrably true. It is not something that we have to shut our eyes and swallow. In the Life that is given through and by the cross, men find salvation. The explanation of this incident is less important than the fact. The sinner is justified by love and love is the true nature of God, for God does actually make men righteous by declaring them to be righteous" . . . "What is not in the mind of God loses its very existence. But the divine forgiveness is put into operation by the forgiveness of men, and our human forgiveness releases the divine power by which sin is abolished."

"The most important thing about the cross remains to be said and it is this: the cross takes its meaning from the fact that it is not the action of men only, but of God. The church sees in the cross the secret of human Salvation because it discerns there not only the historic act of Jesus, but the eternal act of God."

The cross is here pointed out as the frustration and defeat of Jesus in one respect, but in another it is the Victory of love and the spirit of God. "When love at its best and hatred at its worst came into conflict, it is love that wins. For the historic triumph of Jesus is the eternal triumph of God."

W. L. Yates

Professor of Church History and Missions

Hood Theological Seminary

THE ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT

by Luther A. Weigle

A most helpful book in the study of the Bible is the book by Dean Weigle. Within its covers one may find the story of the various translations of the Bible from that of William Tyndale to the one now in revision, the Revised Standard Version (the New Testament has been completed). The book is of immense value to not only ministers but teachers in the church school as well. We recommend this book.

THE MAN FROM NAZARETH**by Harry Emerson Fosdick**

Out of his deep experience Dr. Fosdick has presented us with a new book which is of interesting value to Christian leaders. Rarely can one find the intimate touch with the subject as Dr. Fosdick presents Christ. Simple but moving and readable is this work which views Jesus as the daily crowds, the Scribes, the Pharisees, the sinners, the women, the children and his own disciples, must have seen him.

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE PROPHETS (Vol. II)

A small work selling for 75c has just been published by Harpers. Containing but 112 pages it nevertheless covers the subject well and appeals to us because of its compactness and its availability to all. The book deals with nine of the prophets including Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Obadiah, Malachi, Joel and Jonah.

AN AMERICAN ANNUAL OF CHRISTMAS LITERATURE AND ART**Edited by Randolph E. Haugan**

Books of this type always interest us for so frequently the minister or Christian worker would like to have at hand materials dealing with a special subject. The book itself contains pictures and stories, many of them suitable for worship centers in the church school.

ANNOUNCING THE NATIVITY STORY IN ART

As a lover of art and a leader in the audio-visual movement in the church, you will rejoice in the announcement of the publication of THE NATIVITY STORY IN ART for the Advent season.

You could make no finer gift than The Nativity Story in Art to those in your Christmas mailing list, or to your church congregation. To those who know and love the greatest story ever told, the world-famous paintings that are reproduced will throw fresh light on the drama of the incarnation. To those who have lost touch with the meaning of Christmas, The Nativity Story in Art may come as glad tidings of great joy.

This story interpretation of the birth of Christ is a masterpiece of the printer's art. World-famous masterpieces have been carefully selected by Howard Ellis, widely known artist and interpreter of Christian art. Each picture is reproduced faithfully in full-page, two color duotone.

The 20-page booklet is printed throughout in beautiful blue and black, in a convenient size, suitable for mailing in a 5 x 7 envelope. The jacket is an artistic design in two-colors in a beautiful Christmas motif.

The arrangement of the booklet is in scenes, which makes it possible

to use the pictures and their interpretations as the basis of a dramatized worship service for Christmas. A kodachrome slide set of the eight pictures included in the booklet is available from your church publishing house or the Society for Visual Education, Chicago. All the materials needed for a rich worship service—scripture, hymns, pictures, and interpretations are here.

The time is short. The edition is limited. The price is right. Order in quantities of fifty or more for special quantity rate of 10c each.

BROTHERHOOD WEEK

FEBRUARY 19-26, 1950

(Sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews)

In the Declaration of Independence the Founding Fathers proclaimed to the world. "All men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." These words are the very foundation and cornerstone of our American democracy. There is no other enduring foundation for any nation. It is still true, "That nation alone is great whose God is the Lord." Nations which adjust themselves to that conviction live and nations which refuse to adjust themselves to that conviction perish. Freedom is the gift of God and not the gift of man to man. What man gives, man can take away. If the dignity of man is the gift of a state, who, then, can question the state when it liquidates Jews, permits lynching of Negroes, and disavows all moral law and religious value? Democracy can no more survive without an awareness of God than a watch can run with a broken mainspring. Freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion, any more than liberty of conscience means liberty from conscience.

When you accept that as a basis for life there follows out of it a deep concern for people in terms of civil rights and a new consciousness of brotherhood. If God is our Father, then we are all His children and we are brothers, living together for the common good. It is to this high task that the National Conference of Christians and Jews dedicates Brotherhood Week.

We cannot escape the fact that this week is observed in a grim hour for the world. There are cruel forces at work in our world which disavow and deny that conviction. The Communist attack on Catholic and Protestant in many nations is founded upon the cynical sophistry that all religions must be liquidated save the gospel of Karl Marx. If that should come to pass, then human and civil rights and the brotherhood of man would cease to exist on the earth. This is the issue before us today whether it comes to focus in the fifteen Protestant ministers in Bulgaria, a Catholic Cardinal and a Lutheran Bishop in Hungary, a Coolie in China or a Negro in Georgia. It is time for us all to bear witness in our own country to this

belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, not simply in word, but in deed. So shall we make ourselves secure and become a beacon of light to all the world.

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It will come as a distinct surprise to many a Christian when, on the Last Day, he confronts as his judge a young man, surpassingly handsome, and with a face that is unmistakably Jewish. It's only natural, especially in these latter centuries, to identify Christianity with the non-Jewish element in the world, such that to say a man is a Christian is practically, by that very word, to spot him as a Gentile, or a non-Jew.

We tend to forget that when the Wise Men came to Jerusalem they inquired, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" And Herod sent them to Bethlehem, the ancient City of David, where they found Jesus..

And when the Messiah began His public life, He surrounded Himself with twelve Jews—the Apostles. In fact, it was a Jew, St. Paul, who first carried the Gospel to the Gentiles. It is through him that the rest of us have been made sharers in God's revelation.

That Blessed Virgin Mary, who was His mother and to whom Christianity has had such a tender devotion throughout the ages, was a Jewess, the daughter of St. Anne and St. Joachim.

Catholics venerate a Jew, St. Peter, as their first pope, and another Jew as his successor.

It was the children of Abraham who, through generation after generation, handed down God's truth in a world that else would have lost it. Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah—Jews, all of them—were God's instruments in penning the most sublime pages of our literature. They were His people, chosen above all others, to preserve orthodox dogma, the concept of an invisible Creator of all things. It was their mission to school the world in a religion of sacrifice and atonement, to sensitize the human conscience and educate it to ideas of justice, truth, and purity.

And they fulfilled their mission admirably. They had their lapses, it's true, but always somehow they managed to get back on the track. So that when Our Lord did come, finally, He could speak to a people that understood His language, a people well versed in things of the altar.

Protestant or Catholic, our spiritual ancestry is Jewish. It is a fact we should never forget.

Reverend Richard Ginder
Editor, **The Priest**

